ISSUE 43 APRIL 1991 £1.80

ACE

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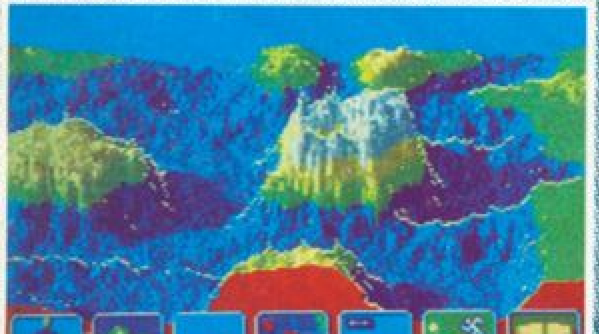
THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

SAHARAN EMPIRE ATTACKS!

FLAMES OF FREEDOM IGNITE

- Full Exclusive Review Inside!



THE COLOUR OF MONEY

Software Scams Blown Wide Open!

DEVELOPERS INTERROGATED

- Renegade
- Gremlin
- Audiogenic

Get the Thumbscrew Treatment

COIN-OP BREAKTHROUGH!

Stunning Developments in the Arcades

LIVE IT!

Actual Reality Exclusive

THE SIMPSONS INSIDE!

PLUS:

6 Pages of Games and Tech News

40 Pages of Hard Pink Information

25-PAGE REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS SPECIAL INCLUDING: CHUCK ROCK, NAVY SEALS, SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE, COLDITZ, WARLOCK, SUPER MONACO GP, MUDS, TURRICAN 2, MICKEY MOUSE, EXILE, + MANY MORE

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SPARKS O

NARC

Your mission is to seek out and destroy the king pin of the MR BIG CORPORATION. You'll have to outwit his enormous army of body guards... gangs of charisma-bypass patients in trench coats, the bullet brain with the build of a rhinoceros and the breath of a dung beetle, packs of vicious canine yappies, the psychotic clown with an evil sense of humour - you'll die, but not laughing! Then there's the gas guzzling cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door rail, a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away as he rolls down main street leaving you coughing lead. It's not all bad!... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean, shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I say he was Mr. Big? No, he's MR BIG!

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ROBOCOP 2

Seven levels of muscle-straining, reflex-testing, sideways scrolling fury! Destroy the lethal drug Nuke, face a stream of deadly Nuke gangs, and then - if you survive - face the terror that is Robocop 2!

MORE THAN A GAME ROBOCOP 2 IS THE PRIME DIRECTIVE.

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TOTAL RE

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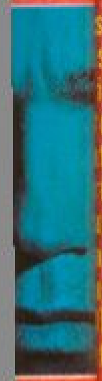
OC

OF GENIUS

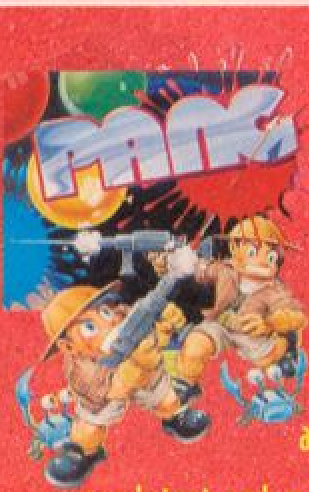
AL RECALL



s Doug Quaid you Travel to Mars to scover your true identity - your ssion is now a journey of non-op action, strange mutants, turistic vehicles and a startling ray of weaponry all captured in perbly executed graphics and a me play that compliments the ccess of the year's top movie. TAL RECALL... a nightmare journey to the 21st Century.

RES INC.

CHASE HQ II - Special Criminal Investigation - continuing where CHASE HQ left off. Your mission is to track down, chase and apprehend dangerous criminals. It's FASTER - explosive power sends you bulleting through various terrains - hold the line or plough the fields! It's TOUGHER - the criminals wield some heavy hardware - but so do you! You can shoot but you must dodge their flak... heavy gunfire, trucks unloading their cargo onto your bonnet... it's the meanest pursuit game to hit the micro screen. The extra features will leave you gasping for extended play- weather changes, bodyguard squads, grenade lobbing bikers,gun-choppers... just play it!... we dare



No time for balloonin' around!... no time to shoot the breeze!...in fact you've hardly set your feet down in the mighty U.S.S.R. and it's all action. You sight up your latest and most formidable balloon poppin' piece...but now that bounce bomb has just multiplied!!! Tour the world in the most addictive arcade game of the year from Mitchell Corp. A quick eye and super fast reflexes will give you just a half-chance of a win... the other half will come if the bounce goes your way!

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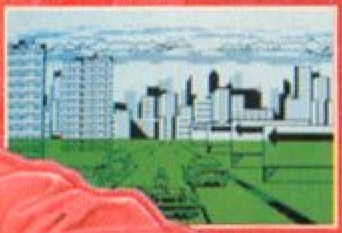

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"Say not the struggle naught
availeth,
The labour and the wounds are
vain,
The enemy faints not, nor
faileth,
as things have been, things
remain.

Arthur Hugh Clough, commenting on an especially tough end-of-level guardian in *Turrican 2*.

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Gods is the first game from rebel software publishers Renegade. See page 54

MUDS (Mean, Ugly Dirty Sport) Coach a team from the planet Gnoid in your quest to run the ultimate squad in the monster sport. Page 61

It's the hour of reckoning for the World's First Actual Reality machine. See page 41

reviews

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ON CD *page 22*

Following in the footsteps of Rise of the Dragon, Sherlock Holmes receives the CD treatment on page 22..

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

Money may well be funny in a rich man's world, but in the depression-ridden 90's, the thought of lining someone else's pockets is anything but amusing. At ACE, we decided that it was time a thorough investigation into the wheelings and dealings of the software business was conducted. So, for the first time, you can see the figures, read the quotes and make up your own mind about the price of the games you play. Just who is taking the lion's share of the profits. CRY for the penniless programmers! BOO at the rich businessmen!

READ the entire grizzly story on page 32.

The numbers game explained. With games pushing the £40 mark on a regular basis, just who is taking all the money?

"Elementary my dear Watson! We have been digitised into a full motion video adventure featuring glorious technicolour graphics, and depthy character interaction. We must tell Lestrade!

ACES HIGH! Various elements of the ACE Team have been darting around all over the country this month in order to report on the latest gaming events. We've interrogated three of the top coding houses in Britain to bring exclusive details of their new games. We've also interviewed top flight industry heavyweights on the fiscal side of the games business. The Tricks 'n' Tactics section makes a welcome return this month. And of course, we've got all the games reviews you could possibly wish for. *Midwinter 2, Lemmings, Super Monaco, Navy Seals, Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe.* And many more! We've also got a brand new Games News section, a beginners guide to CD jargon and a report from Apollo Communications on their amazing *Actual* Reality machine. And all on brand new high-quality paper!

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15 **LETTERS**
Chests off-loaded, shoulder-chips removed, bitter pills swallowed and scores settled.

76 **TRICKS'n'TACTICS RETURNS!**
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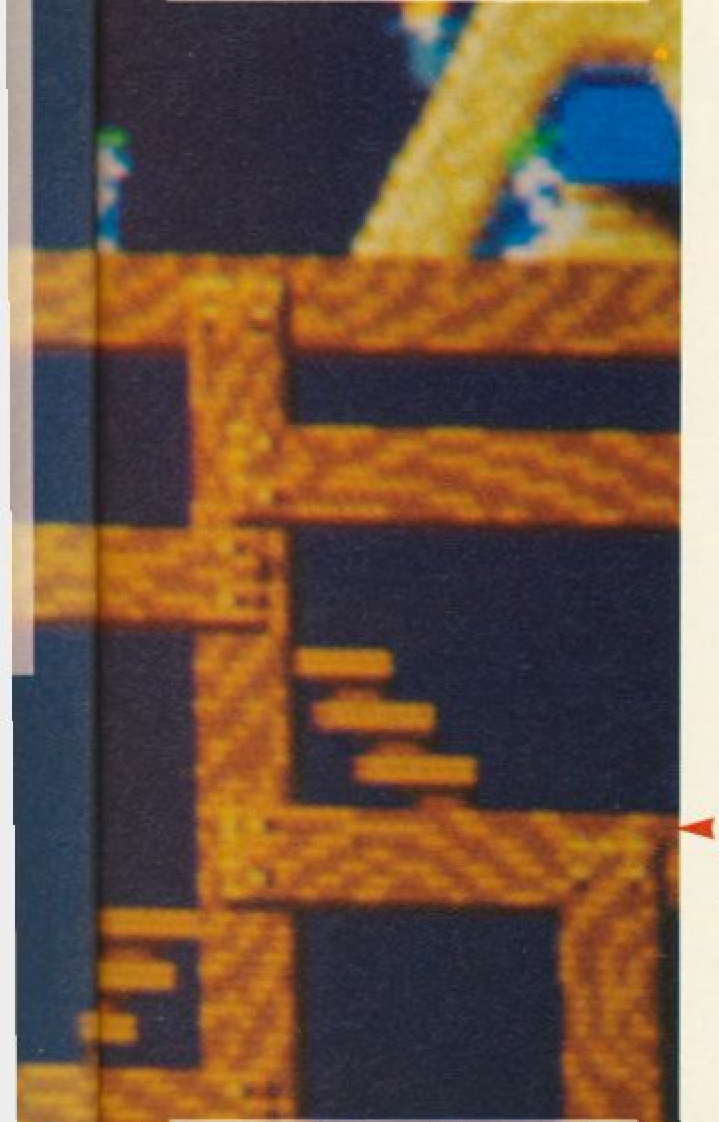
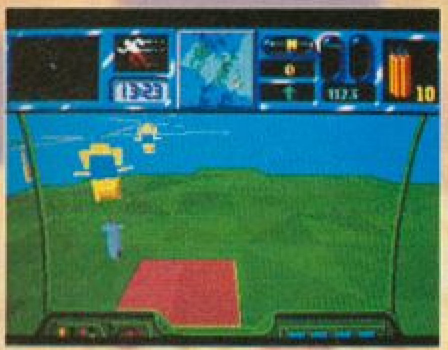
89 **PINK PAGES**
Bargains, bargains bargains! Plus the Stockmarket, Public domain and hardware directory. No PP; no comment.

NEW NEWS

That's right! Our news section has grown and split in two! The Tech News pages will contain gadgets, widgets and all manner of electronic doo-dads, while the Games News will cover the software scene.
It all starts on Page 7



Lemmings a true breakthrough in original gameplay or a lot of pretty backgrounds and too much mouse-clicking? Find out for yourself on page 56.



COVER STORY

Microprose's *FLAMES OF FREEDOM* is an incredible game. It features twenty two different modes of transport, potentially infinitely variable character personality and interaction, polygon driven 3D, fractal generated maps and military strategy on a grand scale. Read all about this epic from the man behind Midwinter and Lords of Midnight on page 46.

APRIL 1991

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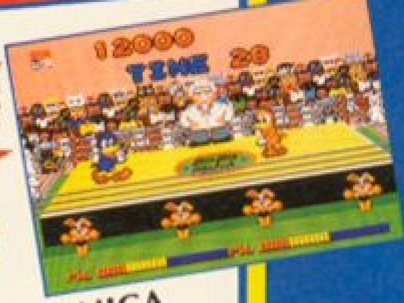
DYNAMITE DÜX



AMIGA

When Little Lucy is stolen by the terrible ACHACHA her two friends BIN and PIN really get angry! When they land a punch KERPOW! No one stands up.

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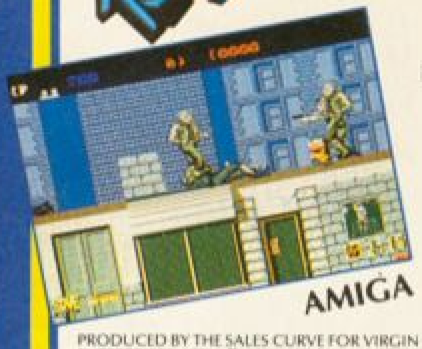

AMIGA

ENJOY FRANTIC oriental action in this Ninja beat-em-up. Search for kidnapped children and dispose of marauding thugs with blows from feet, fists and shuriken stars. Classic Sega coin-op thrills!

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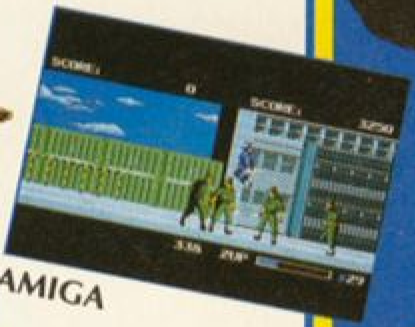
THE NINJA WARRIORS



AMIGA

You are MULK, pal ... and as THE totally wicked revolutionary your gonna build 2 assassination machines — The Ninja Warriors — and attempt to chill out the evil master-greek, BANGLER.

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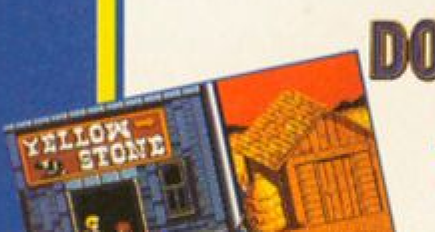
双截龍 II DOUBLE DRAGON The Revenge



AMIGA

The Double Dragons, Billy and Jimmy, seek to avenge the death of Marian — and might even be able to bring her back to life if they can only penetrate the secret lair of the Shadow Boss.

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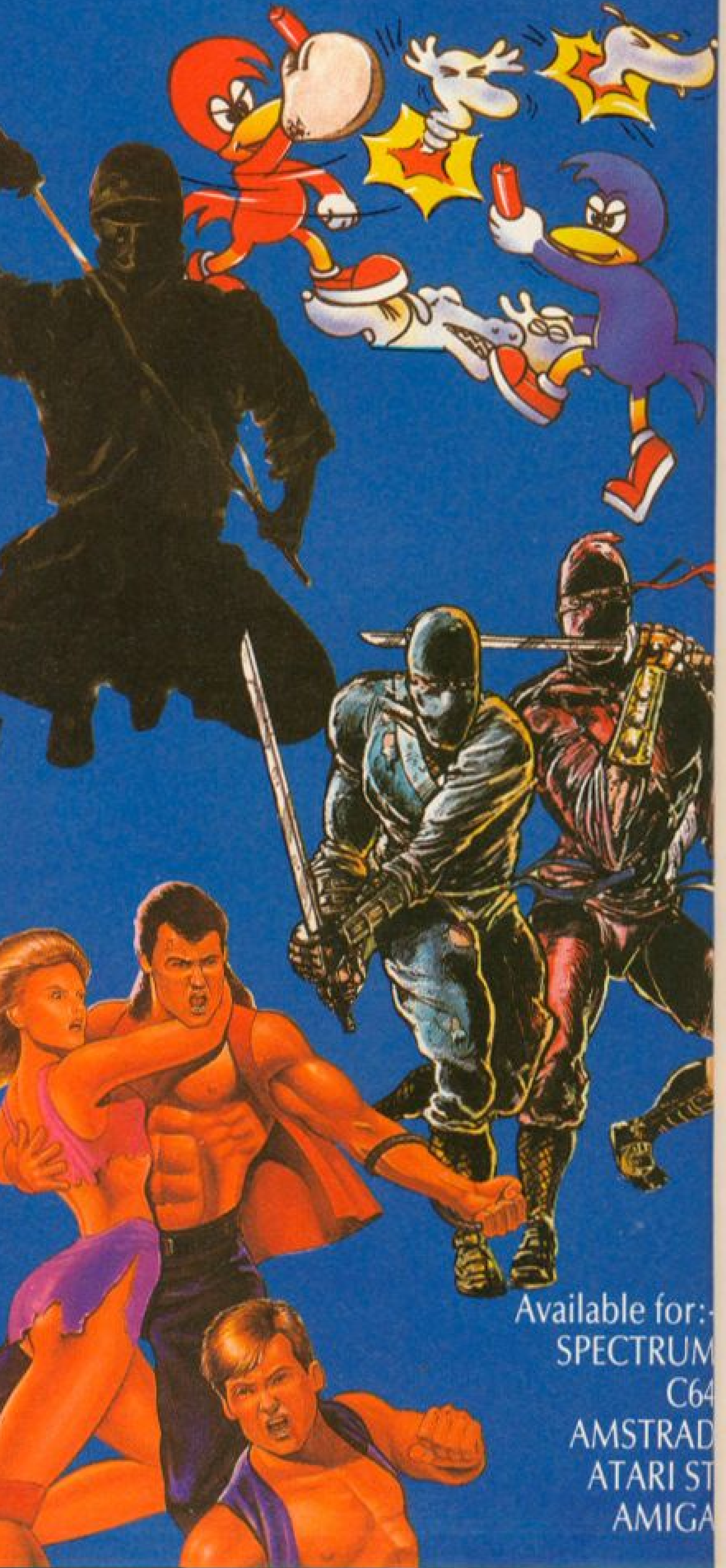

Available for:-
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TECH NEWS

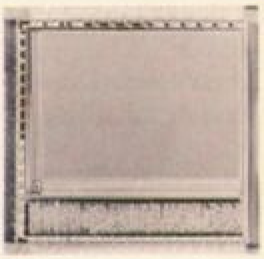
Wristwatch Video

- *Price of the Lynx colour handheld console has been dropped to £99 for a standalone machine, it still costs £129 for the California Games bundle. Atari has also announced the release of some Lynx extras: cigarette lighter power adaptor (£9.99), sun visor (£5.99), kit case (£14.99) and pouch (£9.99).*

In a few years you could be wearing a wristwatch videophone like fictional detective Dick Tracy thanks to two researchers at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Professor Peter Denyer and Dr David Renshaw have constructed a video camera on a chip with lenses no bigger than a match-head.

The possibilities of this 8mm2 chip are beyond unimaginative boundaries... vision toys, £25 video cameras, 'micro' camcorders, miniature night-vision goggles, domestic security devices (alarm verification, human recognition, 'smart' movement detection, event recording, door-entry), babywatchers, biometric verification systems (fingerprints, faces, signatures), electronic vision, desktop publishing, robotics, videophones, etc.

"This new technology promises to revolutionise existing vision applications and enables a range of new products in consumer and commercial markets that have been previously unapproachable," says VSLI Vision Limited (VVL), the company setup to manage the development and commercialisation of this remarkable gizmo. Hurrah, the Brits can still cut it!



This demo 'camera-on-a-chip' currently integrates a 312x287 pixel array with 4,000 gates of loic. Soon we'll be wearing night-vision goggles thanks to VVL!

Rocket Sales Soar

Interest in toy rockets has apparently soared since the recent Iraqi SCUD attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia and the subsequent exploits of America's Patriot 'SCUD-buster' air-defence missile.

"Model rocketry has become one of America's fastest growing educational, scientific and fun activities," says Estes Industries, a principal model missile manufacturer.

"The basic model rocket, which may vary in length from about four-inches to over six feet, consists of a nose-cone, body tube, fins, launch lug, recovery system and engine. The rocketeer uses a pre-manufactured solid propellant engine which is electrically ignited. Over 250 million rocket launches are proof enough of the built-in safety features of model rocketry."

Rockets range from state-of-the-art to the sublime. Estes' Comanche-3, a three-stage model, reaches altitudes of over 2000 feet and speeds of up to 400mph.The Eggspress carries an egg to 300 feet and back again, while Astrocam photographs Earth during its flight. The Astrocam 110 aerial camera with Delta II launch vehicle shoots one full-colour 110 photo per flight. A 1/500th second shutter is activated at ejection just prior to parachute deployment. Regulations limit the weight of the rockets to 453 grams at liftoff.

"The use of live specimens such as flies, grasshoppers or earthworms, presents an opportunity for studying the effects of acceleration," says Estes but warns, "please do not launch mice, gerbils and other rodents as the tremendous acceleration and g forces of model rocket flight could be very frightening and harmful to them."

Write to Estes Industries, Penrose, Colorado 81240, USA for more info.

Entertain Your Brain

Socrates Educational Video System from Vtech Electronics turns your TV into a 'learning and fun centre' for children aged five and up.

Over 100 activities are built into the main unit including maths, spelling, art, word games and music. The Socrates character guides children through 80 programs including six levels of maths, five levels of word problems, four musical activities and three word games. Socrates also incorporates the Superpainter drawing utility.

The basic Socrates unit costs £99.99 and can be expanded with extra cartridges such as Facts 'n' Fractions (an introduction to fractions, mixed numbers and decimals), Around the World (an adventure in world geography), Super Science and History Hysteria,Voice Cartridge and Mouse System.

• *Japanese coin-op company Sega has removed Marlboro cigarette signs and logos from its racing games like Super Monaco GP after complaints from the Federal Trade Commission in America. The authorities were worried about the subconscious effects caused to younger players by such adverts in video games. Sega apparently didn't have official permission to use the Marlboro logo.*

Take Away TV

Look out couch potatoes. Soon there will be no escape from watching the television or video. Not even in the toilet. Hitachi has launched the world's first multisystem portable TV and VCR.

The Lapwatch combines a 5-inch colour LCD screen, television tuner allowing you to select up to 20 channels, and full-sized multi-system VCR that plays VHS cassettes of any format. The machine is compatible with PAL, NTSC and SECAM European, American and Far Eastern television systems. It even includes special magnetic shielding for clearer reception.

Hitachi describes the deck as a 'creative fusion of advanced technologies'. This Japanese electro-pioneer is also working on HDTV, mega-memory chips, neurocomputers and levitating cars. All these are 21st century toys, the Lapwatch can be yours today for only £1299.99!

"This newcomer will make your fellow commuters envious when you watch TV on your train journey to and from the office. You can really go places together. To the ends of the Earth, if you wish," asserts Hitachi. The company is less loud about the battery life of this monster machine. Nevertheless, Lapwatch certainly beats a portable phone in pose-points.

Singa-Longa-Silicon

Karaoke, the embarrassing amateur singing craze from Japan, is about to invade British homes thanks to The Singing Machine Company in Middlesex.

Karaoke addicts can now practise My Way in the comfort of their very own bedroom before doing a gig at their local wine bar. The Video Karaoke Mixer quickly and simply converts home hi-fi, television and video recorder equipment into a fully fledged video karaoke system.

The 'Karaoke Conversion Kit' costs £325 and comes with video cassette, microphone, video karaoke mixer, software and connector. A number of companies are already showing an interest in video karaoke software including Thorn EMI producing one hour long tapes for £9.99 each.

The Signing Machine Company hopes to sell the deck through multiple electro-retailers.

"Just pop a video tape into your video cassette recorder and you'll create hours of fun and laughter for all the family. A sure way of making your party a roaring success," sings the karaoke firm, "simply by linking the Video Karaoke Mixer to your existing home stereo/video/television equipment. Select one the specially recorded tapes (all the lead vocals have been omitted) and place it in your video cassette recorder. Within seconds your entire family or party are immersed in a great night's entertainment, singing along to a video with super-imposed lyrics which change colour as the song progresses."

For further details phone The Singing Machine Company on 081 569 1090. Don't forget to tell them you heard it in ACE first.

BattleTechnology

In an update to the exclusive ACE feature back in late 1989, we can reveal that over 50,000 customers have visited the Chicago Battletech Centre since it opened in August last year.

'The idea behind the Battletech Centre is to bring the sort of movie magic made popular by Star Wars to a place where consumers will actually participate in a futuristic world," says the creator ESP Interactive Entertainment.

For $6 (weekday) or $8 (weekend) players buy a 25-minute 'gaming experience' plus an unlimited stay in the observation area.

The hands-on experience is split between a 10-minute 'Get Ready' section for training and strategy, then a 15-minute go in the cockpit. Here you'll take control of a 30-foot robot and battle against other people while three 40MHz proprietary computers with 32Mb of memory feed you with 200 on-screen three-dimensional ray-traced objects, 16 million colour palette and spatial sound effects.

Jordan Weisman, designer of the Battletech Centre told ACE that he expects another four to five sites to open around America this year, plus a further ten in 1992. A London-based Battletech Centre is also on the cards and three Japanese companies are interested in licensing the idea over in the Far East. The first Japanese Battletech Centre will probably open in Tokyo during the winter.

Weisman and his colleagues are now developing new hardware and software for use in future Battletech Centres. These state of the art systems will have five times the speed and four times the resolution of the current version. ESP is also devising new games to play in them. Shadow Run will be the first, followed by Renegade. "It will take six months to prepare graphics and gameplay," explains Weisman. Rest assured, ACE will keep you in the picture.

Come Together

Two of the world's biggest electronic entertainment companies have joined forces to work on a new audio-visual device. Sony is supplying Nintendo with an add-on CD-ROM drive for the Super Famicom console.

The official word is a new Sony-Nintendo CD format, but insiders believe this to be a little more than a clever sales-pitch for a standard 600Mb CD-ROM drive without any extra frills. Still, this isn't to be sniffed at. ACE just wishes Sony and Nintendo will pull out the stops and plaster the device with built-in RAM to act as a buffer for pulling graphics off a compact disc. Unless they add a significant amount of extra RAM, the CD drive will add high quality audio to games but will not enable the system to fully use CD technology. Over to you, guys!

In the meantime, rumours suggest the price of the CD-ROM drive will be just under ¥100,000 (£400). Nintendo says the new deck will attract both serious software titles and bigger better games. Before you get too excited, don't forget the original Super Famicom console isn't even officially available in this country yet.

2Not that we're against traditional toys and games. No sir. And here's a nice piece of Meccano modelling if ever there was one...

Playpower 1991

These are toys of man's desiring...or so the British Toy Fair would have us believe. But Steve Cooke came away from the playpen distinctly unimpressed...

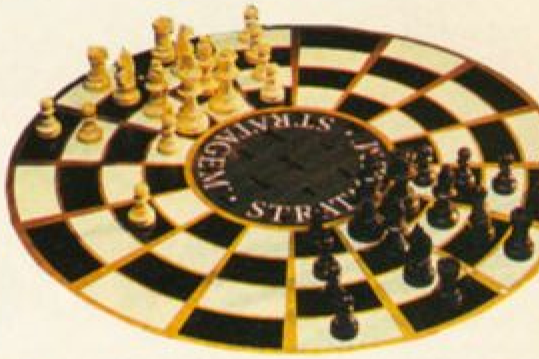
What with all the revolutions going on in the digital world, you'd expect a few surprises from today's toy manufacturers. After all, it's years since ex-Atari (now Mr CDTV) Nolan Bushnell founded Petsters – a range of interactive softies that used ROM-driven mechanics to mimic the behaviour of some very dumb animals, or since Prism Leisure took over the Hippodrome to show off their latest range of home robots. In those heady days, we were promised the earth and a host of interactive, computer controlled funsters that would go forth and multiply thereon.

Hmmm...Back to reality. Here in 1991, the secret of Sindy's real surname is still a source of excited twitterings in dark corners, Worlds of Wonder's talking Teddy Ruxpin has undergone a redesign (due to excessive returns) that effectively removes all interactivity, and the closest Barbie Doll has got to a new age of entertainment is to have her clothes designed by the same team of seamstresses that designed the Mattel Powerglove.

In fact, the 1991 Toy Fair was a wildly disappointing event for anyone interested in new technology. Sure, there were more electronic gizmos on show than ever before, but these were almost all either Nintendo consoles, Sega consoles, or small plastic boxes with even smaller LCD screens, infinitesimal amounts of gameplay, and the biggest name the manufacturers could find to slap all over the case.

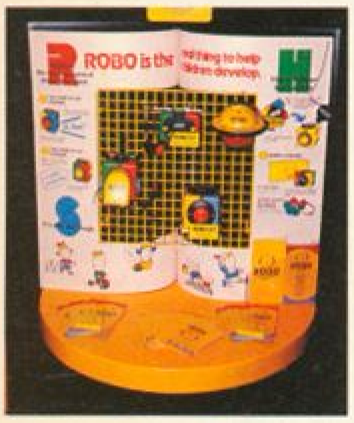
Yup, consoles and LCD games are in. Originality, invention, risk, excitement – these are all totally out. For as long as the recession lasts, toys, it seems, are going to remain strictly for kids – who haven't been educated enough to know what they're missing. The only good news is that when we tried to visit Mattel in the States to do a companion feature on their development, they refused us permission to visit due to 'secret projects' which will be ready around 1992.

Of course, we'll all be far too old for this sort of thing by then, won't we?



▲ Strategem from Logicsource endeavours to put a new light on a very old game by playing it on a circular board. Apparently there could be a home computer version in the pipeline – watch this space. Meanwhile, you'll be able to get the board version in the shops for £24.99.

Chess machines have been developing rapidly in the last few years and are now proving tough competitors for humans, especially in the field of 'blitz' chess where you have limited time for each move. Mephisto's games are mostly programmed by a dark horse from Cheltenham by the name of Richard Lang. The Mephisto Lyon recently smashed world Blitz Champion Mikhail Tal 4-2, 5-5, 6-2. Their latest models use plug in modules so you can upgrade from an old warhorse to a sleek 68030 based system at the touch of a button. Also pictured here is Chesster, whose tactic is to ruin your concentration by engaging you in idle banter about his next move in a hideous synthesised voice...



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Call Button
Plug

Robo looks interesting, eh? Sort of a robot thingy, right? Wrong. Robo is...wait for it...a musical nightlight. 'Just place your finger on the touch sensor and the light starts to shine. What's more, you can even hang it on the wall...' What's more?? What, I ask you, could possibly be less??

◀ Yawn. First it was pet rocks. Now it's Pet Slugs. According to the man who originated this concept, slugs are 'multidensional in their relationships to humans'. We can think of quite a few other things that you could say that about, all of which would be more interesting

Well, at least these ▶ made us laugh. Called Go-Go, one of these furry fellows will trot along the pavement with you as you control him (or is it her?) using a switch on the leash. Go-Go can even mount pavement curbs, but we were a little perturbed as to what might happen when his furry white leggings came into contact with the calling cards of worm-infested curs from the back-streets

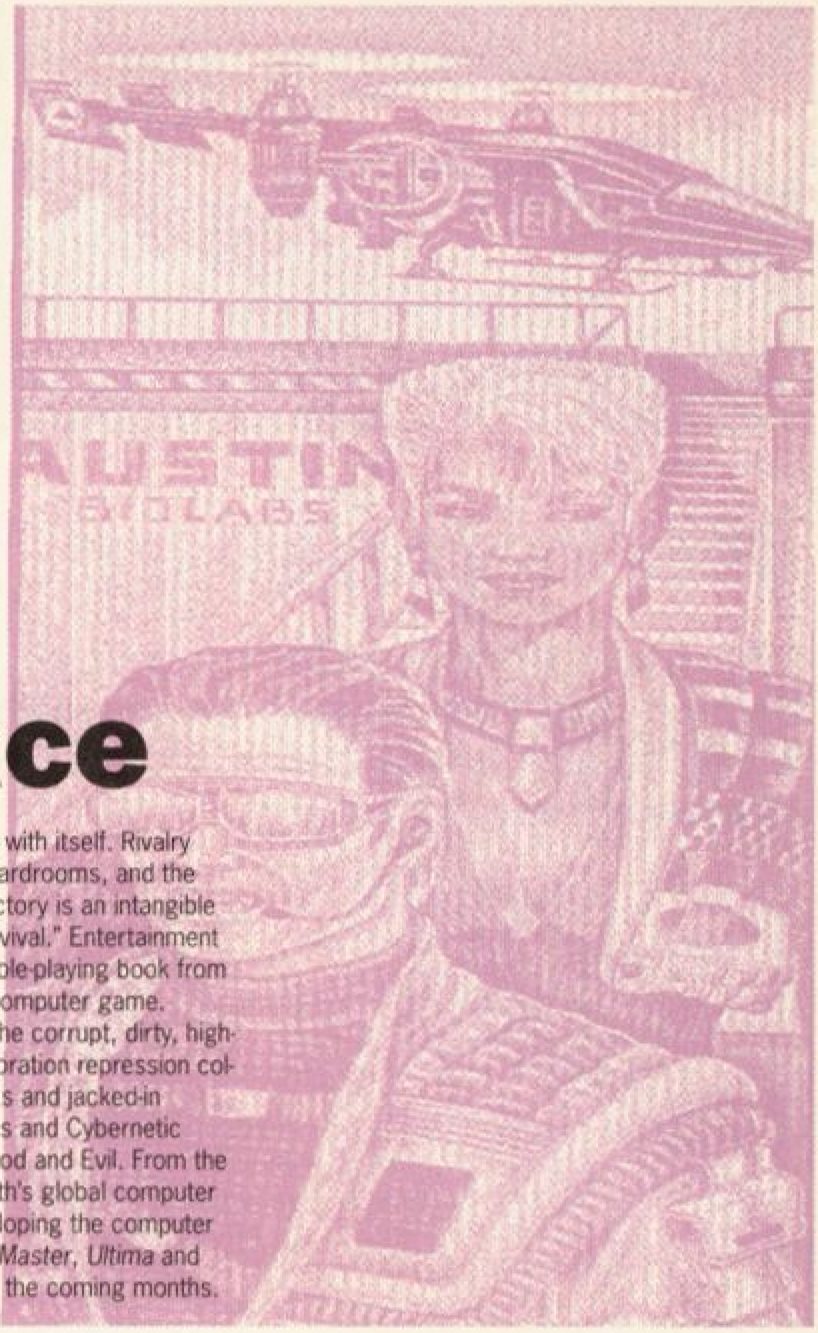
TEMPLE RAIDERS

◀ 3D has a whole new meaning in the toy industry at the moment. It doesn't mean deep space vector graphics, it means bits of folded cardboard and plastic mouldings as today's board games try to conjure up a bit more atmosphere than their flat-top predecessors...

• KFC is gonna rock yer. No, this isn't another sampler dance band but a famous fast-food chain. Kentucky Fried Chicken is planning to shorten its name to initials and enlarge its menu in an effort to attract health-conscious customers. Soon you'll be able to tuck into grilled, boiled and baked poultry. The herbs and special spices will stay, but the chicken will be less fatty. Colonel Sanders must be turning in his grave.

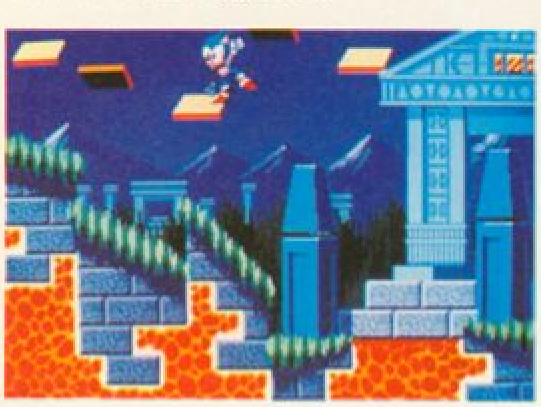
Cyberspace

The Sprawl [San Francisco] 2090. "The city is at war with itself. Rivalry spreads throughout the grimy streets, bedrooms, boardrooms, and the unreal computer matrix of Cyberspace. For some, victory is an intangible gain in a vast power struggle. For others, it's just survival." Entertainment International has licensed the cult *Cyberspace* sci-fi role-playing book from ICE and is currently sketching out some ideas for a computer game. "*Cyberspace* is a complete role-playing game set in the corrupt, dirty, high-tech Earth of 2090 AD," says ICE, "where Megacorporation repression collides with Sprawl street warfare. Muscle-grafted Punks and jacked-in Netheads crawl from the gutters to scrap Media Stars and Cybernetic Mercenaries - a conflict beyond the boundaries of Good and Evil. From the depraved, polluted cities to the surreal beauty of Earth's global computer matrix, this is the world of cyberspace." ODE is developing the computer RPG has hopes to incorporate elements of *Dungeon Master*, *Ultima* and *Sleeping Gods Lie*. ACE will bring you the full story in the coming months.



Sonic the Hedgehog

What game was everybody playing at the Winter CES in Las Vegas last month? "*Sonic the Hedgehog* is the world's first superhero hedgehog," Sega reveals, "Speed is the name of the game and Sonic is the world's fastest ever video game character in a horizontal-scrolling game. He zips over land and sea, zapping evil insectiods and ghoulies at a dizzying pace. For something totally different, help Sonic fight his way through a maze that rotates 360°." Sounds good, eh? Ready for release in a couple of months on the Megadrive.



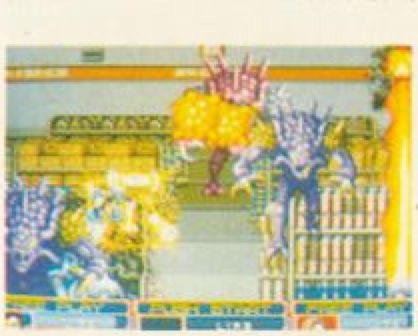
Sonic Hedgehog: a truly amazing character. Certain to hit your screens soon.

Alien Storm offers three player fun, each controlling a hero with unique qualities. A tall order for home machines.

Alien Storm
SEGA

Alien Storm

Alien monsters are taking over the world in the forthcoming Sega coin-op conversions from US Gold. *Alien Storm* is a two-player action game where you must fight your way through the city from two different perspectives including a three-dimensional 'into the screen' view. Zap creatures with ray guns, flamethrowers and more. Watch out - some can transform into even more vicious alien monsters. The three screen characters (Gordon, Karla and Scooter) are operating a hotdog stand until some evil invaders appear, the trio then assume the role of world famous Alienbusters. Utilising powerful weapons they launch an all-out offensive against the invading aliens. Each of the three unique heroes has various potent armament and special assault tactics. Three persons can play simultaneously in the original arcade game. "Everything on the screen (walls, shelves or any other item) can be destroyed, a feature that you'll find will do wonders in removing stress," confides Sega. *Alien Storm* is out in a few months on Megadrive. Tiertex is handling the computer conversions for US Gold which are set for a June launch.



G-LOC

They said it was impossible but bold US Gold is converting the Sega sprite-intensive sensation of *G-Loc* onto humble home micros. Sega describes *G-Loc* (Loss of Consciousness by G force) as 'a super-real jet simulator game'. Fly your 'Zeek' Mk II Sega Wing Carrier Fighter through skies filled with hordes of hostile aircraft. Blast 'em to bits with Dragon Fry missiles or Vulcan cannon. Catch the enemy plane in your HUD and lock-on when the circular sight overlaps it. See missiles blaze a trail of destruction. Outrun your enemy with full throttle or afterburner. Move from inside the cockpit and zoom out to a behind-your-plane outside view. Battles are set in three worlds: Beginner (training course for the novice), Medium (after training practice go into actual battle) and Expert (skillful players can engage in aerial dogfights).

"We have combined ultramovements, supersonic speed and superb overall performance in a product of sophisticated graphic technology," explains Sega, "A new level of graphic expression brings you thrilling screen realism like you've never 'scene' before." Software developer Images is in charge of coding this coin-op into your computer. *G-Loc* will appear on all major 8-bit and 16-bit machines in October.

213
RESCUE
G-LOC

The G-Loc coin-op; a might feat of conversion is underway at US Gold to bring this monster to your machine.

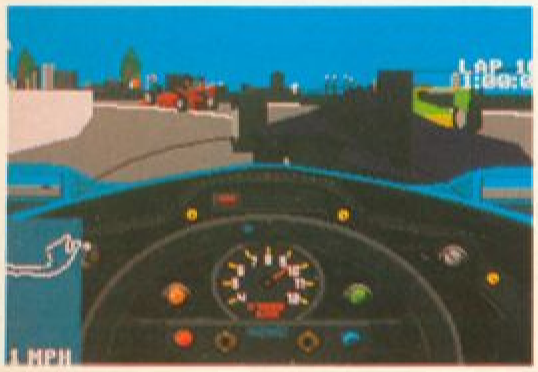
Arnold returns to the role that made him famous. As a cybernetic killing machine he destroys L.A. in *Terminator 2*

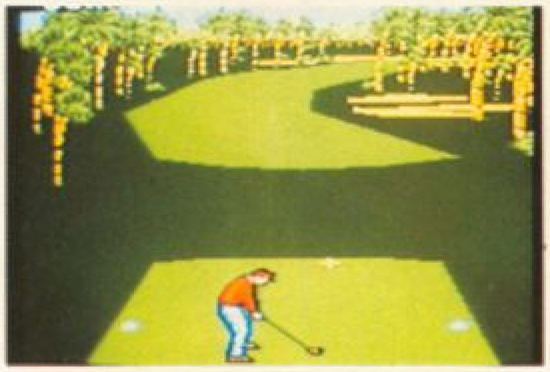
Terminator

Out of the ashes of nuclear fire he rises (again). Arnold Schwarzenegger returns to his best movie role to date this summer in *Terminator II: Judgement Day*. He plays a merciless cyborg assassin sent from the future to kill Sarah Connor and her son, a prospective rebel leader. This Caroloco Pictures' all-action sequel has been directed by James Cameron, the geezer responsible for the original *Terminator, Aliens II* and *The Abyss* sci-fi movies. The Terminator feels no pity. No pain. No fear. You can catch the brilliant T2 trailer today by watching the *Total Recall* video. Acclaim (LJN) is producing the NES and, possibly, the Super Famicom games of *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, Ocean is in charge of the computer conversions. All games are scheduled for release in time for Christmas.

Mario Andretti

Thankfully not a *Super Mario Bros* racing game. Follow the career of one of the greatest racing drivers of all time. Work up through six professional racing circuits. Start in the dirt bull rings with Sprint Cars, then Modifieds, Stock Cars, Sports Prototypes, Formula One and Championship Cars. Animated maps show every world-famous course before racing. Practise against the pack. Includes Instant Replay Feature: sky cam, car cam, behind cam, infield cam, track cam and ahead cam. Programmed by Distinctive Software Inc. (creators of the original *Test Drive* from Accolade and *4D Sports Driving* for Mindscape), published by Electronic Arts. *"Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge* is not only a game of fast driving, strategy is important in managing resources and gaining sponsors," declares EA. Out later this month on the PC for £29.99, Mario Andretti supports all major graphics and sound boards.





Master System owners can now play as good a game of golf as anyone thanks to the original and perhaps best, World Class Leaderboard arriving on their system.

World ClassLeader Board

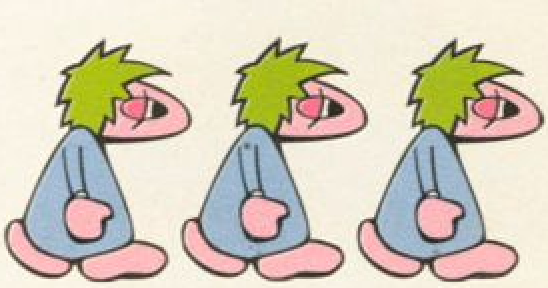
It's about time Sega Master System owners had the chance to play a decent round of golf. *World Class Leaderboard* from US Gold and Access features four challenging 18-hole courses: St. Andrews, Doral Country Club, Cyprus Creek and the specially designed Gauntlet Country Club. Up to four players can compete, three difficulty levels and driving range/putting green practise ranges. "*World Class Leaderboard* will undoubtedly prove to be the most exciting golf simulation available for the Sega Master System," affirms US Gold. Out in July.

Paperboy

This paper-round sequel will be Mindscape's premier Super Famicom title, follow-up to the successful Atari coin-op and set for a Christmas release. No other details are currently available except the game is also being converted over to the Amiga, NES, PC, Gameboy, Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad CPC.

Lemmings II

Datadisks of these stupid little creatures are on their way courtesy of Psygnosis. Keep an eye out for swimmers, balloonists and crane operators. The original *Lemmings* game will also be appearing this year on the Super Famicom, Megadrive, Gameboy, NES and PC Engine. A coin-op version will be available in September and a movie company has expressed an interest in licensing the *Lemming* characters



Proflight

Enthusiastic about its first simulation though not wanting to be accused of cashing-in on the Gulf Crisis, Hisoft (better known for writing assemblers and PASCAL compilers) is releasing a Tornado flight simulator on the Amiga. According to Hisoft, *Proflight* 'seems to create a new standard of accuracy and flyability in the simulator market'. "*Proflight* puts you in charge of one of the most advanced military aircraft of our time," offers Hisoft, "Based on extremely accurate flight equations which map the behaviour of this complex fighter very closely, *Proflight* is not only a realistic simulator, but is also simple, and fun, to fly."

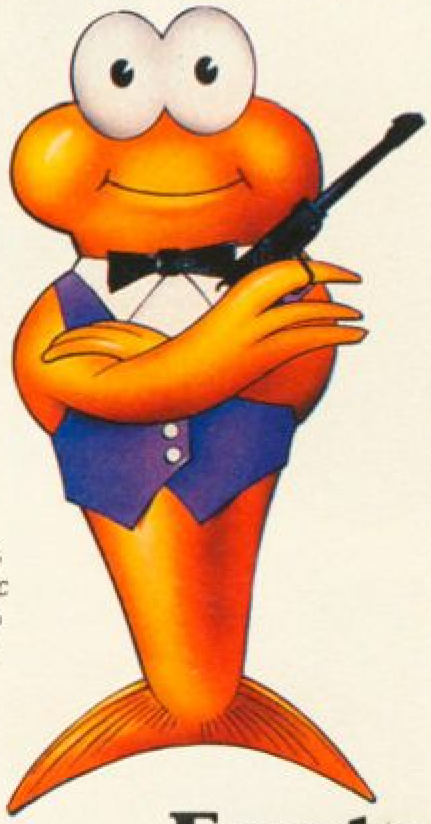
The sim comes with a comprehensive 150-page ringbound manual and has the unusual option to switch between solid 3D or wireframe objects to quicken the display rate to 14 frames per second. Both the Amiga and ST versions of *Proflight* cost £39.95. Hisoft is already planning extra mission and scenery disks, but a desert datadisk is out of the question. "We don't want to play on the Gulf War," says David Link, boss of Hisoft. "We're looking into doing other aircraft simulations or a multi-jet product." More details from Hisoft on 0525 718181.

Robocod

Hot on the heels of *James Pond - Secret Agent,* comes the latest word in law enforcement. Further high jinks on the high seas and puzzling prime directives from Millennium and programmer-come-graphic artist Chris Sorrell. Amiga and ST game coming later in the year.

Slave To The Rhythm

Betty Boo, the current pop sensation with girl-next-door looks and attitude, is providing the music for the forthcoming *Magic Pockets* game (see page 55 for full preview) from the Bitmap Brothers and Renegade Software. The track will probably be a remix of *Doin' the Do* which could be re-released as a single. Miss Boo, a fan of video games, is currently recording her second album in Los Angeles, California.



Die Hard 2

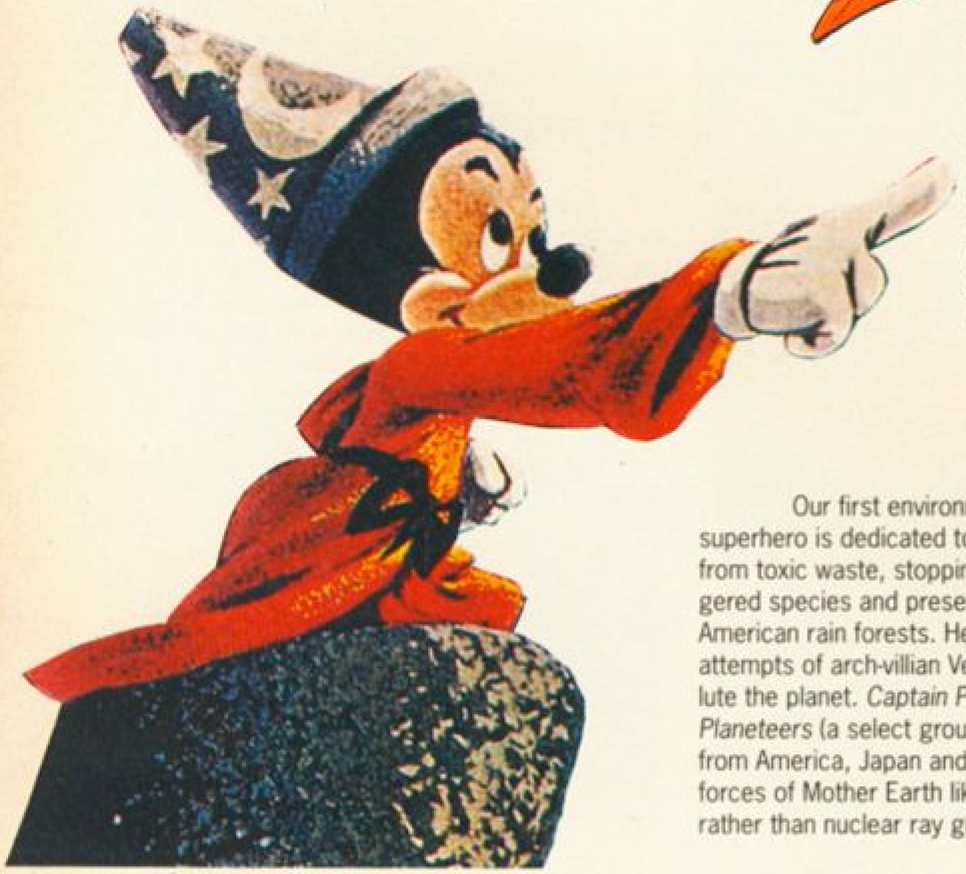
Grandslam has risen out of the ashes to bring us the computer and console cut of the Bruce Willis all-action movie.

Future Wars II

More 'cinematique' role-playing adventures from French software house Delphine and British distributor US Gold. Out on the Amiga, PC and ST in late summer.

Fantasia

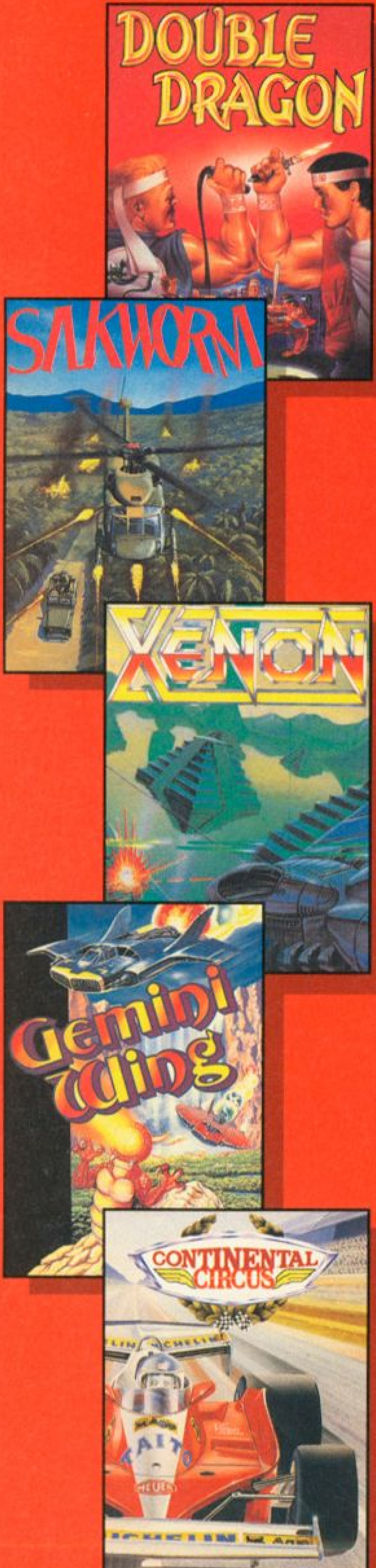
First there was Mickey Mouse's platform capers in the Castle of Illusion. Now freak out with *Fantasia* on the Megadrive. "*Fantasia* instantaneously captures your attention with totally unforgettable scenes from dancing mushrooms and sugar plum fairies, to wayward brooms challenging the Sorcerer's Apprentice," states Sega, "Stellar graphics and gameplay. The ultimate Disney fantasy game. A guaranteed hit for all ages."



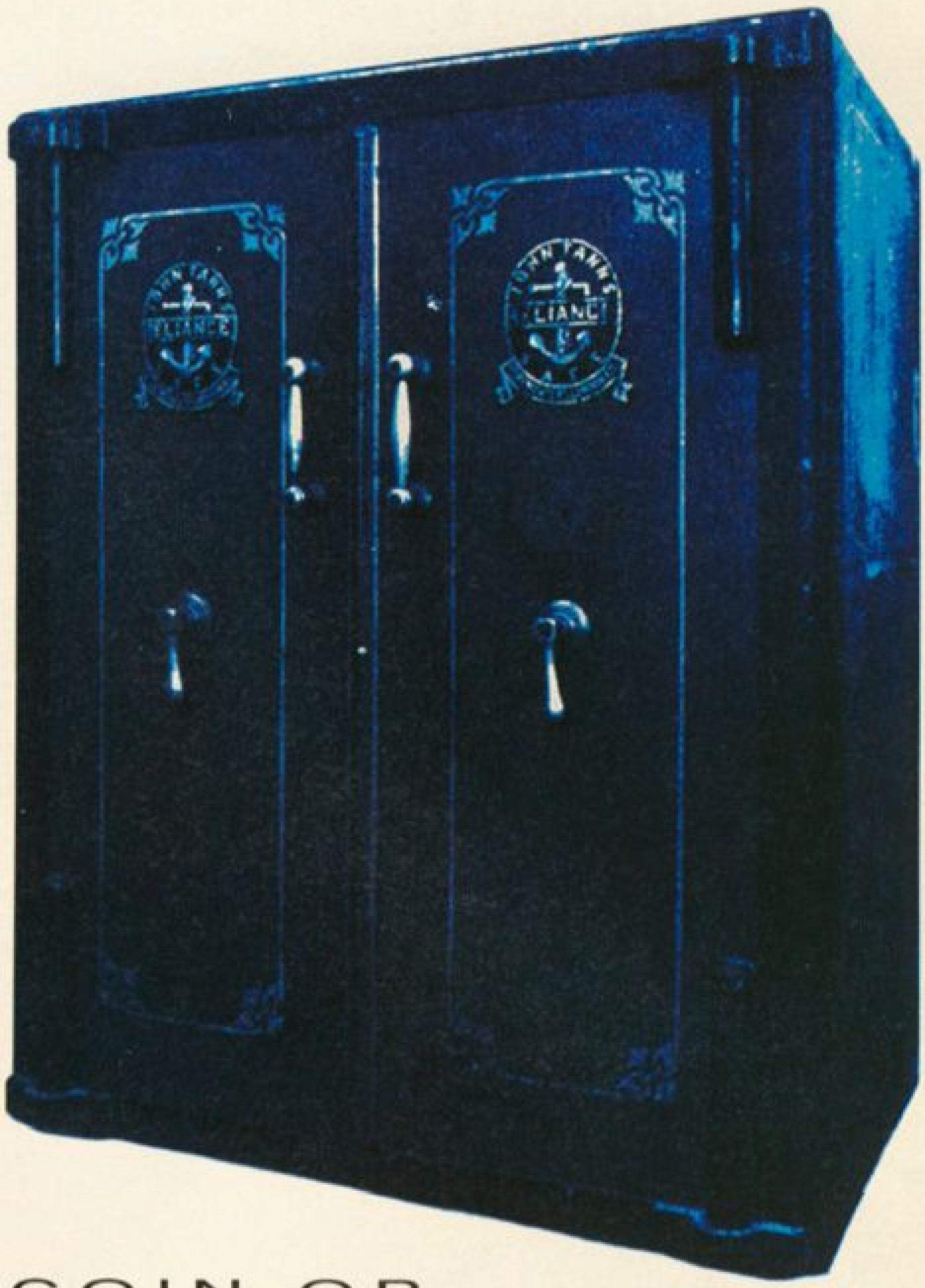
Captain Planet

Our first environmentally-aware comic superhero is dedicated to rescuing the planet from toxic waste, stopping hunters killing endangered species and preserving the South American rain forests. He always foils the attempts of arch-villian Verminous Skumm to pollute the planet. *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (a select group of helpful teenagers from America, Japan and Russia) use the natural forces of Mother Earth like Wind, Fire and Water rather than nuclear ray guns or CFC bat sprays. Greenpeace would be proud, Captain Planet is so Green he has emerald-coloured hair!

This fashionable American TV cartoon series, made by Ted Turner's Atlanta-based company (of CNN fame), features the voices of Whoopi Goldberg, Jeff Goldblum and Sting. It is due to be shown on TV-am from next month. Mindscape has picked up the computer and console rights and expects to have the game ready for release in the autumn. Stay tuned for the full story in the next issue of ACE.


DOUBLE DRAGON
SILKWORM
XENON
Gemini Wing
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

safe.



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OUT THE GAME!!!

Letters

AFTER SALES SERVICE

I am writing to share with my fellow readers my experience with the best after-sale service anyone can expect from a software house. Some time ago I bought *Kick Off 2* from a software shop here in France. When I opened the package, I found that the game and the manuals were all in French.

I was surprised because I thought all games produced in the UK would have instructions in English. At first I thought of only replacing the manual, because operating the game is pretty straightforward. I sent a letter to Anco asking if it was possible to send my French manual to replace it with an English one. About ten days later I received, to my delight, a letter from Anco which contained an English manual without any request of payment or even sending my French manual.

During the time that their letter took to reach me, I has visited a friend of mine who had a version of *Kick Off 2* that he had bought in the UK. I noticed that my version was missing some features, such as tactic changing etc. I decided to test Anco's patience once more with another letter asking it it was possible to place my disk with another one which had all the features.

Days later I received a reply from Anco instructing me to return my disk. It was only another week before I received a new version of the game from Anco.

I didn't think that UK Software houses had after sales service (I formed this opinion after trying to return a faulty *Bubble Bobble* disk). I hope that other software houses follow this fine example.

Ahmad Jassem
St Julien en Genevois
France

After sales support seems to be getting a whole lot better in the UK. But I'm sure there are plenty of readers with truly grizzly after-sales experiences. In come the letters... As for your French manual, that's 1992 for you.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

Does this sound familiar?

Month 1:
You read a news announcement that Wizzosoft are working on a new game, to be called *ThunderSwords* (for the sake of argument) which will outdo anything yet seen in the genre. You think "mm... sounds interesting".

Month 2:
Previews of *ThunderSwords* start appearing - it's really special. You think, "I must look out for that when it comes out"

Month 3:
Reviews of *ThunderSwords* start appearing and the game scores high marks all round. You rush down to the shop to buy it - but it's not available.

Month 4:
You keep checking the local shop for *ThunderSwords*, but it's not available.

Month 5:
You go into the shop and there it is on the shelf - *ThunderSwords!* Unfortunately, it's only available for a machine that you haven't got. It doesn't matter what machine it is- this always happens and is evidently some variant of Sod's Law.

Month 6:
Nothing happens

Month 7:
Magazines start publishing tips and cheats for *ThunderSwords*. Unfortunately, you still can't get it.

Month 8:
Finally - you go into the shop and there it is, on your machine, at last. You pick it up and say to yourself "Ah, *ThunderSwords* - that was the game I was so interested in Six months ago. What a shame there's still no sign of *Day of Doom* that got such good reviews last month". *ThunderSwords* goes back onto the shelf.

I don't think this is atypical, and sometimes the process takes more than eight months. how much money are the software houses losing on this account? Quite a lot, I should think. Now, if only they keps every new project a secret until it was actually ready for release on all formats, so the rave reviews could be followed by instant sales, they could not only stave off disappointment for the punters, but increase their profits quite handily. But will they ever learn?

Roger Musson
Edinburgh

SILENT, INVINCIBLE, INVISIBLE . . .

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

We would like to thank ACE for this right to complain about the statements made in an ACE article (issue 41 February) about *EPIC*, which portrayed Digital Image Design and myself in particular as arrogant, pretentious software developers.

In a recorded interview about *EPIC* and *F29 Retaliator* PC, I was asked by a respected ACE journalist the boring old question.. "Who do you thnk has the fastest 3D code?"

"Oh no, not again!", I sighed, "This is all we ever hear, working on 3D games. Look, I'll tell you what; let's get everybody who thinks they may have the fastest 3D, including Digital Image Design and lock us in a smoky, seedy room (imagine wild west poker game). We'll all throw a grand down and see who wins..!" quotes the smirking sarcastic Kenwright"

So we believed the story finished. But some weeks later we opened the February ACE and read in horror:

Read super confident Kenwright's challenge; "Beat my routine and win £1,000!" This was never said!

From now on we're going to be a lot more careful about our jokes! As you can imagine, we are annoyed as we have been drastically misrepresented over a sarcastic comment which has been blown out of all proportion. Articles like this can damage our image and effectively alienate ourselves from other software developers. We have already received lots of criticism about this article, so we have decided to put the record straight.

Martin Kenwright and Phil Allsopp,
Directors of Digital Image Design
Cheshire

Sorry that you didn't like the feature. The paraphrase was intended to impress upon readers the quality of the 3D routines included in Epic, *the faith that DID have in their product and also as a strong pull into the article for the readers. Apologies for any embarrassment caused.*

TWO PLAYERS OR NOT TWO PLAYERS?

What is it I find so great about multiplayer games? Even games where you can't affect you partner (e.g. *Bubble Bobble*) are still a lot more enjoyable when played with a friend, but what exactly makes *Bubble Bobble* so addictive? It's certainly not the graphics or sound, so is it the fact that you have a friend with you and you are co-operating with them?

Some people say that they prefer the thrill of pitting themselves against the computer. To them a computer is a way of escaping from the real world for a while, but for me, a game should be able to support two players. Most of the time this shouldn't bee too hard, so why don't more payers give us two-player games?

David Pearce
Southampton

PRIZE LETTER
PRIZE LETTER

Interesting thoughts David. While it's simple to include a player one/player two option in virtually every game, simply enabling two people to play one after another, producing a decent two-player simultaneous game is another matter. Recently the appeal of playing against human opponents has been explored with games like Hard Drivin' 2, *allowing two machines to be linked together and played at the same time, although quite who can be bothered to cart their computer round to a friend's house is uncertain. Most games, however, simply aren't appropriate for two-up fun. It doesn't make financial sense for softcos to produce a true two-player game; one actually requiring two people to run it, since no-one without a permanently available second body would buy it. Pity.*

VIRTUAL RESPONSE

Having read the letter you published "Virtual Curse" in your march issue, I feel I must respond to what Peter Green as to say and echo your own responses.

What people must realist is that once the ability and knowledge is available to create a particular kind of solution to a specific scientific or technological problem, be it for a genuine need or for the achievement of a goal laid down by the technologists themselves, there is nothing that can be done to limit the pursuit of this objective. At present the race to perfect a practical and cost effective virtual reality system is a prime example of this.

I am by no means condemning this type of research. I myself am a self confessed "technophile" as William Gibson put it and I am positive that I am not alone in this. The success of your excellent magazine shows that many of us are seduced by the lure of technology. What I am trying to put acrosss is that even if someone had asked oppenheimer if inventing the atom bomb was such a good idea he would have, quite rightly, replied "If I don't, somebody else will"

The same applies to research and development of weapons systems at places such as Marconi and Plessey today. Ask these people the same question and you will get the same reply. These are obviously extreme examples but I think that they highlight the fact that the tidal wave technological advance is quite unstoppable, for good or for bad, and I for one look forward to the day when I will be able to "jack in" and some, if not all of my wildest dreams will come true.
Keep up the good work

Neil Thomson
N. Humberside.

I'm not entirely sure about your Oppenheimer analogy, but I think I get the picture. I'm sure Peter Green doesn't view VR with the same trepidation as the unveiling of a grizzly new weapons system, but perhaps others do..?

SIM GALAXY?

Why don't Maxis, the makers of *Sim City*, make a *Sim Galaxy*. This could have a number of features including; comets, meteorites, planets being destroyed by comets or aliens, stars going supernova, astronauts being sent into space, evolution on planet and world wars.

It could also have a galaxy designer in which you design your own planets, their size, gravity, whether or not it has atmosphere or life, their orbits, the elements on the planets and type of life.

James R Corbett
Scotlant

P.S. I have a Spectrum +3

A fine idea. Personally I think that people will have enough on their plates with Sim Earth *at the moment, but a Galaxy simulator sounds great to us, and what better machine to run it on!*

PC POWER

I remember reading in ACE that the ideal home entertainment set up is a computer such as an Amiga and some form of console. I disagree. I think a modern fast PC makes both redundant. Consider the following points:

1. Most games are available in PC Format

2. The sound quality achieved with a sound card such as the AdLib easily puts Amigas and consoled to shame and Sound cards are now widely supported.

3. With VGA, the graphics quality easily surpasses Amigas and consoles. Contraty to ACEs Pink Pages, a modern VGA PC can display up to 256 colours at a time from a palette of over 260,000. And many PCs can do that with resolutions up to 1024 x 768. Although there are no hardware sprites, the sheer processing speed more than compensates.

4. Nearly all PC software may be installed onto a hard disk or RAM disk and most VGA PCs these days are sold with hard disks as standard. This means that the games may use huge amounts of data and loading time takes a small fraction of a second. Who needs cartridges?

5. When new standards appear such as the new ultra-fast XGA graphics with 65536 colours on screen at huge resolutions, you simply sell your old VGA card and buy the new one. Most add-ons, like extra disk drives etc, fit neatly inside so you don't have a desk covered in spaghetti.

6. Competition in the PC market is ruthless. This means hard disks, extra memory etc are very cheap compared to the Amiga equivalents. PC prices are dropping all the time and the quality of the machines is constantly improving.

Christian Low
Tyne & Wear

PCs surpassing both console and computers? I doubt it. Swift PCs can now shift and crunch numbers better than anything, but there is no hardware trickery to support sprites, parallax backgrounds etc. This makes them excellent for data intensive games or those using 3D polygon graphics, but poor for arcade-style romps. When was the last time you saw a decent shoot-em-up (other than Wing Commander) on the PC? We still think you require both a console and a computer to enjoy the ultimate games experience. Perhaps your ultra-PC should fit into the equation instead of an Amiga..?

THAT'S ENOUGH CD, ED?

If I read about CD-ROM, CDTV, CD-I *et al* one more time in ACE I think I'll scream! Now don't me wrong, I'm sure there's a very good reason for all the excitement and the hullaballoo, but I can't see it. Okay, so you get mega-amounts of storage space and (reasonably) fast access, but that seems to be about it. Am I missing something? I think not.

Isn't it about time ACE jumped off the mythical CD bandwagon and concentrated on games and hardware available now?

Darren Wills
Epping

What do you mean 'mythical'? CD technology is here, now, and being used by several computer and console manufacturers (NEC and Fujitsu are two who immediately spring to mind). Agreed, CD isn't exactly widespread at the moment, but that day is coming. Why? Take a look 'Laser Lessons' starting on page 71 for the full reasons as to why we're behind CD, and why you should be too.

TIP-TASTIC, MATE!

Thanks for the Tricks n' Tactics supplement given away with ACE Issue 42. I really enjoyed it - it was full of colour and useful information. Personally, I prefer general gameplaying hints to hacking cheats or complete solutions (I can't see the point of playing a game if you're going to fiddle it). It's definitely the best freebie ACE has given away in a long, long time (except perhaps for the wonderful little Gameboy booklet). How about another one in the near future?

Ben Kilmer
Dumfries

Glad you liked it! Being the democratic organisation ACE is, the possibility of another tips supplement is in your hands, readers. On pages 39&40 there's a special ACE questionnaire where you've got the opportunity to tell us exactly where we're going wrong (and right! - Soften the blows a bit, won't you?) and win yourself some super-dooper software into the bargain.

PREDATOR 2™
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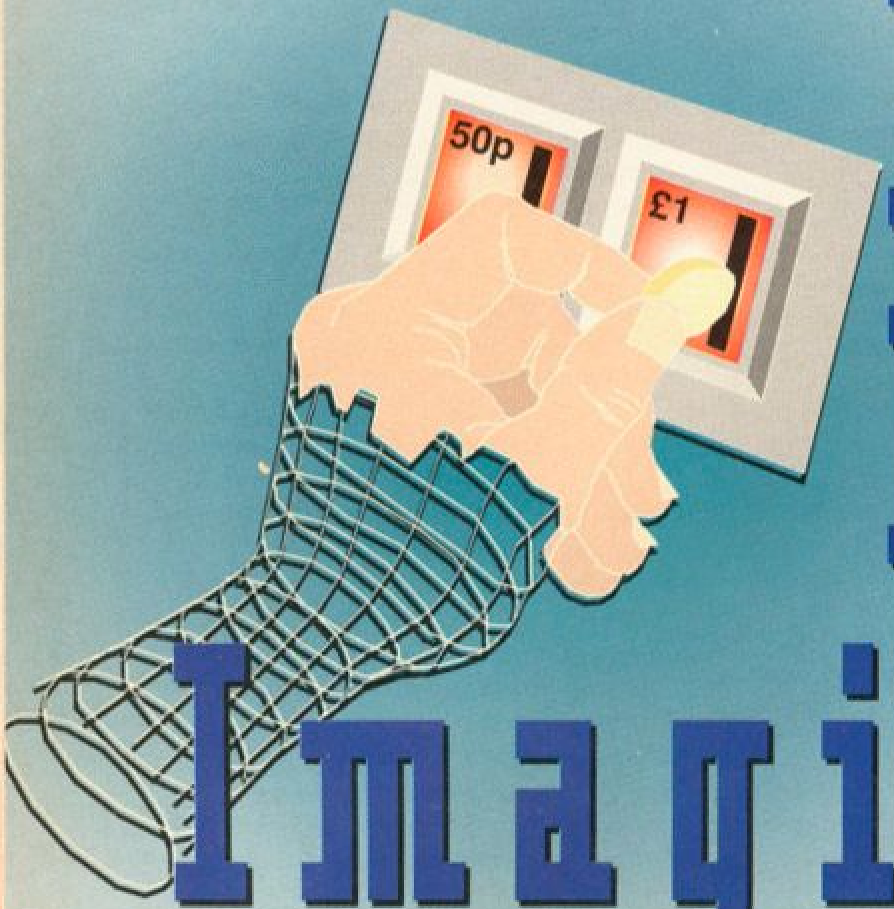

Images Beyond Imagination

DVI video processors, multi-megabyte memories, film-like images, CD-quality audio. Rik Haynes leads you through the next generation of arcade video games...

The digital dreams of a Californian company will soon make the overused Sega sprite engine redundant by bringing a new breed of cinematic compact disc coin-ops to the market. Data East has announced the next generation of video games will have DVI (Digital Video Interactive) technology enabling film-quality animation from CD-ROM.

Based in San Jose, the crafty corporation has signed exclusive rights to develop a new generation of arcade games based on Intel's advanced DVI technology. Using Intel's DVI i750 video processor, Data East will produce graphically sophisticated coin-operated video games with animated imagery that approaches film-quality. The first DVI games are expected to reach arcades by the end of summer and will be priced competitively with existing video games.

"Our DVI games will revolutionise and revitalise the arcade video game marketplace," says Joseph Keenan, president of Data East USA, Inc. "For the first time, arcade games will have graphics with the intensity, depth and realism of film animation. Players will have the sensation of being inside the game as never before."

DVI makes possible the high-performance storage and retrieval of large blocks of animated graphics on CD-ROM media. Using Intel's i 750 video processor, and its own propriety hardware and software, Data East has designed a system that quickly and cleanly sends massive-amounts of graphical information to the screen, thus creating animated images with smooth, movie-like motion and definition. Data East has already demonstrated a prototype helicopter action game called Thunderstorm.

"Over the past few years, arcade video games have lost some of the technological edge over home entertainment systems," believes Keenan, "DVI technology returns that advantage 10-fold, and makes immediately available a highly advanced multimedia computer technology that will be found in arcade systems long before its entry into the home marketplace."

Keenan plans to supply the DVI hardware and software development tools to third-party games designers interested in producing DVI video games. Data East is also looking into a video jukebox utilising CD-based music, video and DVI technology.

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

IVG (Interactive Video Game) is the newly developed game system that applies Intel's DVI technology to a Data East customised CD-ROM drive. Games that can be made with IVG include titles using real life images... Mad Dog type games using actual pictures, golf and driving games using footage from real courses, baseball games using video of pitchers and batters from baseball matches, poker and fortune telling machines using real-life video and quiz games based on questions using authentic pictures.

Games that require images too hard or impossible to obtain through filming could use animation with the latest in computer graphics. You can expect shooting games with outer-space and battle themes to have photorealistic images.

And why stop at ordinary games? Imagine surrogate travel for the 'underclass' - £1 will buy you a visit to backstreets Bangkok, the Amazon rainforest or the outer moons of Saturn. Chipmaker Intel says, "DVI technology will allow the traveller to experience 360° panoramic views of locales complete with ambient sounds, views, inside hotel rooms, visits to restaurants to review menus, and narrated tours of the local history and area attractions". Since IVG uses digital image processing, future developments will make new special effects possible. Games involving screen reduction, expansion, rotation. Games requiring 360° panorama shots. Quasi-3D games. Games with variable image reproduction speed.

"We have yet to find out how far we can expand the applications based on the processing capabilities of the LSI chip," says Data East. IVG comes with a JAMMA connector so it can be fitted into existing coin-op cabinets.

WHAT CAN DVI DO?

The Intel i750 chip enables playback of full-motion, true colour still images, high-performance graphics and high-quality audio in an all-digital, interactive environment. DVI video processing techniques are used to store motion video in compressed form. During playback, on-board video graphics processors (the i750 components) preform real-time decompression and manipulation of the digital data and display on the screen.

- Full-colour, full screen, 30 frames-per-second (fps) video playback from CD-ROM
- Over one hour of full-screen motion video storage on single compact disc (proportionately more playback capability for smaller windows)
- Motion video is displayed at 512 by 480 resolution from 256x240 pixel bitmaps in VRAM
- Programmable real-time video manipulation capability on a per-frame basis enabling special effects: skewing, video foregrounds, dissolves, etc
- Simultaneous playback of video streams with graphics, text overlays and accompanying audio

TRUE COLOUR STILLS

Can display high-resolution, true colour still images at a variety of user selectable resolutions and pixel formats. Up to 16.8 million colours can be displayed simultaneously, providing smooth colour gradations that are essential to displaying natural imagery.

Pixel Formats
8-bit, 8-bit CLUT, 9-bit, 16-bit, 24-bit, 24-bit/8-bit CLUT mixed
Display Resolutions
1024x480 (interlaced), 768x480 (interlaced), 512x480 (interlaced or non-interlaced), 256x240 (interlaced or non-interlaced)
Still images can be compressed and stored on CD-ROM.
Compression is controllable through software to meet space/quality tradeoffs required in a game. For example, depending on compression factor and image resolution, up to 80,000 stills can be stored on a single CD.

HIGH SPEED IMAGE MANIPULATION AND GRAPHICS

The on-board video pixel processor provides 12.5 million pixel operations per second. The processor operates with a high degree of parallelism with the display processor. While the pixel processor draws and manipulates bitmaps in the 2Mb of VRAM, the display processor shows images on the screen from other bitmaps.

Performance

- 3000 flat or solid polygons per second (8-bit 1000 pixel polygons)
- 350 Gourard-shaded polygons per second (16- or 24-bit 1000 pixel polygons)
- 75,000 characters per second (8x10 characters)

Image manipulation operations are performed by software calls to microcode routines. These operations can be performed at frame rates together with overlaid text and graphics.

HI-FIDELITY AUDIO

Hi-Fi mono or stereo output is provided through a separate on-board 32MHz digital signal processor. Supports up to four streams of audio, dynamically mixed down to two output channels. Sampling rates, up to 125Kbits per second, can be controlled by software for a maximum frequency response of 16KHz over an 84dB dynamic range. Audio playback can be adjusted by varying the sampling rate and filtering levels. During audio capture, ADPCM audio compression using software algorithms.

WHAT MAKES DVI SPECIAL?

Video is data intensive - one frame=750K
Motion requires 30 frames per second
Therefore: 1 second requires 750Kx30FPS=22.5Mb
CD-ROM=650Mb capacity
CD-ROM data rate=150K per second
Therefore: it would take over one hour to replay 29 seconds of video.
Solution is DVI - because DVI uses file data compression of 160-1.

DVI Performance

Still Images
Max of 1024x512
High Resolution=7000 images
Medium Resolution=10,000 images
Low Resolution=40,000 images (increased capacity with partial images)
Can also capture video in real-time (with special hardware but at a lower res (128x120).

Graphics
Uses 8,16, 32 bit/pixel with CLUT
Graphics overlay on internal or external video

Text =650,000 pages

Audio
5 hours FM stereo, 20 hours mid-range mono, 40 hours AM quality mono

Motion Video (with audio)
1 hour full screen, full motion
4 hours 1/4 screen, full motion
16 hours 1/8 screen, 1/2 frame rate

Typical Example
From one compact disc: 20 minutes of full motion video, 5000 high resolution stills, 6 hours audio over stills, 15,000 pages of text.

"If the processing speed of the CD drive could be doubled, the points in the game where the action switches would be a great deal smoother," Data East confides. "With the development of DVI-LSI firmware (microcode), it will be possible to create special effects like enlargement, reduction and rotation."

FACING THE CHALLENGES

What's the downside of IVG? Games developers will have to find cheap methods of creating high quality video images in order to take full advantage of IVGs capabilities. Firms will have to purchase a £60,000 Silicon Graphics workstation or partner with a video production or professional computer graphics company. Consequently, IVG titles will probably mix real video footage and computer graphics generated by high-end systems with the sort of arcade graphics players are accustomed to.

This drawback isn't stopping British games developers from salivating at the prospect of IVG and other DVI games systems. "This is the first platform to do a movie license justice," says Peter Molynuex, the creator of Populous and Powermonger at Bullfrog. Martin Kenwright of Digital Image Design (F-29 Retaliator and Epic) thinks the system is ideally suited to producing complex simulator-type games based around fast cars, planes, helicopters or futuristic space fighters. "If you based it on 'The Last Starfighter' movie you would tangle with complex 3D starfighters," he envisions, "these battle sections would have interactive CD sections (landing in a docking bay, rearming, meanwhile sequences) and as the game branched out in any direction, dependent on player performance, the appropriate video section would be shown to match the state of play. For instance, if players win there could be jubilant scenes."

Everybody we canvassed agrees that IVG graphics will have to be film-clips, low budget video, cartoon animation, digitised images or generated by heavy-duty computer graphics workstations. These images aren't cheap to create. "A decent Quantel artist costs £200 per hour," reveals Phil Harrison, Software Development Manager at Mindscape. "The costs involved will prohibit the full use of these DVI features... and the gameplay has got to match this quality of presentation". Jim MacKonochie, a leading expert on multimedia, has one solution. "I would design games that mixed television-quality images and computer graphics. As an example, in Dungeon Master all the monsters would be filmed at TV quality and would appear overlaid on the computer graphic generated dungeon."

A surprising niche market could arise out of this price factor. Model makers could supply the realistic but reasonably cheap objects needed by these IVG titles. Models could be shot directly on video or scanned into a computer special effects deck.

Peter Molyneux points out that it would take an artist 48 years to fill a single compact disk with hand-drawn graphics! Nobody wants to wait that long for the first DVI game. ACE will reveal how Data East is coping with these problems – and preview the first DVI games – in the coming months.

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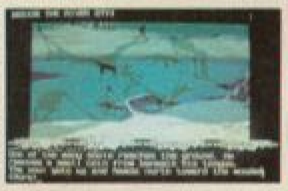

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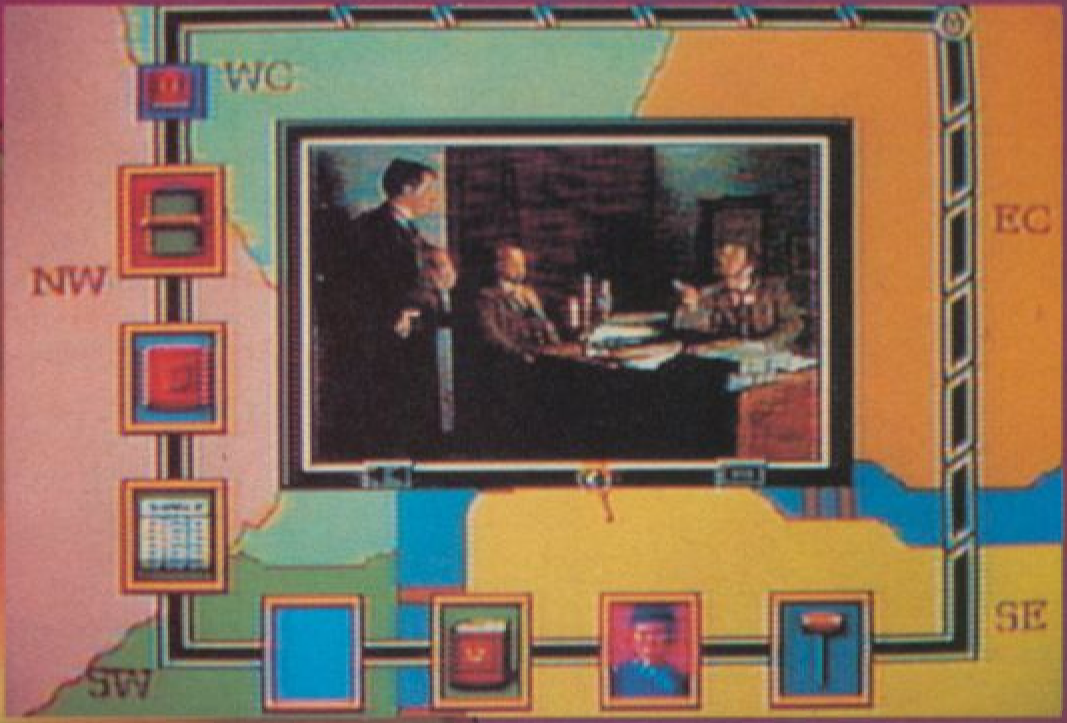


(Right) ICOM are the first people to make good use of window animation. The central image bursts into convincing life at crucial moments, accompanied by realistic sound

(Bottom) One by-product of the spread of CD-ROM could be the increase in CD+G disks from record companies. Basically, CD+G was a dead-end standard developed by the audio business to find a use for the 5% of each audio CD that goes unused by the CD-audio process. The answer they came up with was to encode graphics in this space that could be displayed on a TV while the CD was playing. However, very few people have purchased CD+G CD players, so until recently CD+G releases were few and far between. Commodore's CDTV has full CD+G and so does NEC's Turbografx system. Combine that with the increased popularity of Karaoke, and CD+G (which of course can display song lyrics on screen as well as pictures) may

CD now

If you still think that CD-ROM is a dream of the future, think again – CD games will be hitting the shops in force this Christmas and the hardware will be cheaper than ever before. What will Santa be playing with this year?

Suddenly, CD is bursting out all over. Sierra are announcing their immediate support of CD-ROM and a special upgrade kit for PC owners and (possibly) other formats to follow; Sony's Data Discman is lined up for launch before Christmas at a price of around £250 with a computer-compatible CD-ROM version to follow; most software houses are now fully embarked on development programs that should yield software by the autumn – sooner where CDTV is involved. There's now little doubt that you'll be loading up a CD-ROM game on your machine within eighteen months. Will it really be any better than the games we're getting now? And if so, why?

Despite early pessimism about the potential of CD-ROM for games, the industry is now beginning to realise that simply having so much data storage to play with is going to radically alter the nature of computer entertainment. ICOM's *Sherlock Holmes* is a good example...

HALFWAY HOUSE

ICOM were the company originally responsible for developing the icon adventure format, first seen in games like *Deja Vu* and *The Uninvited.* They stole the show at CES recently with *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*, developed on CD-ROM for the NEC Turbographx system, and out on the CDTV later this year.

Sherlock Holmes is interesting because ICOM realised that, while we can't have full-screen, full-motion video yet, we can still have partial screen full-motion video. In other words, the slow data rate (see our article on pages 71/3) offered by CD-ROM is still fast enough to animate a portion of the display in real-time using digitised graphics, even if it can't manage the whole screen.

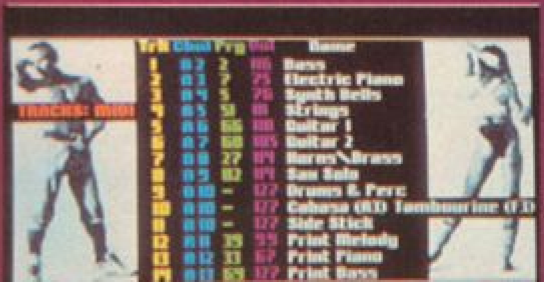
The effect when you're watching *Sherlock* is pretty impressive – while the main game is driven traditionally by icons, the graphics window occasionally bursts into life with stunning animation. And it's not just the pics that impress either – ICOM have made full use of CD-ROM's audio facilities to deliver speech, music, and sound effects.

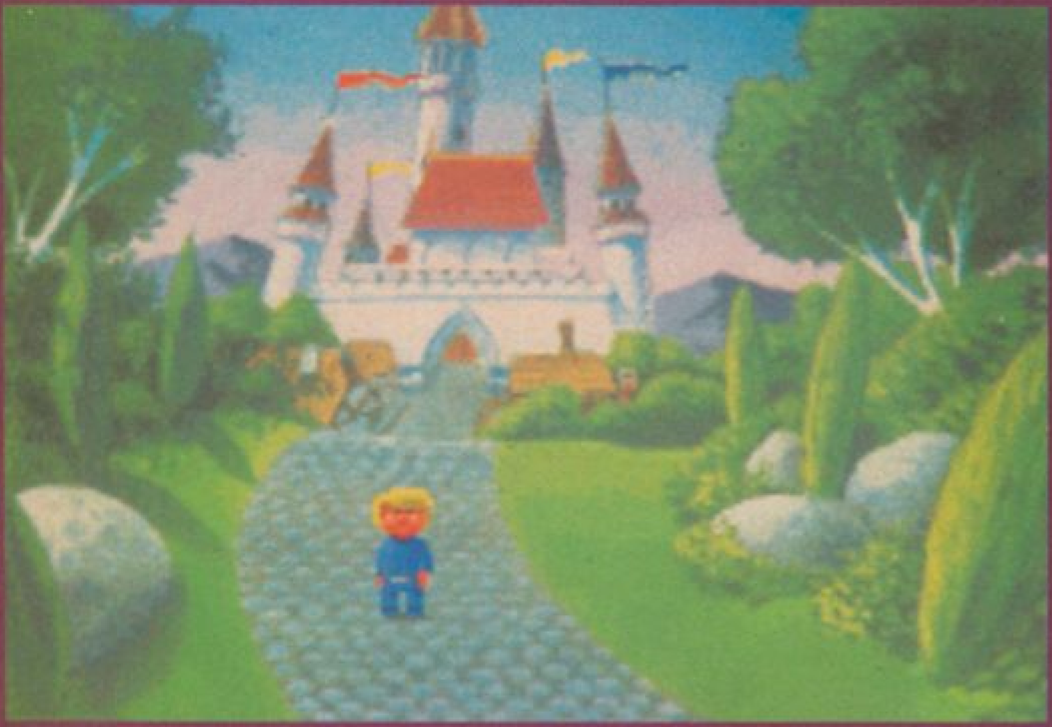
NEC reckon that *Sherlock* is the 'first title that differentiates compact disk games from standard chip-based software' and, presumably, from floppy titles too.

'Up until now,' claims NEC's Ken Wirt, VP of Home Entertainment, 'CD titles have featured great sound and graphics, but they have not given the consumer a significantly different experience from the standard games. *Sherlock* will be the first in a line of new CD-based home entertainment software that will make the player feel like he's participating in a movie.'

PSYGNOSIS

While other companies are developing their graphics animation and audio skills, Psygnosis are applying rigorous scientific programming techniques to squeezing the most out of CD-ROM's performance. The result, demonstrated behind closed doors at CES in January, was so impressive that developers queued up at the UK firm's hotel suite to catch a glimpse.





(Left) Sierra's Mother Goose may sound a bit kiddy, but CD gives the program enough punch to make it a joy to watch for most gamesters

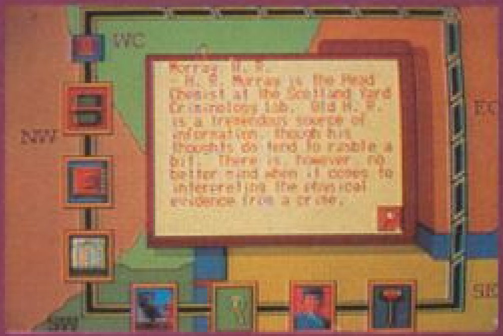
(Bottom left) NEC's Turbographx (the American equivalent of the PC Engine) has been offering CD compatibility for some time – and at one stage the company was able to claim that almost half the world's CD-ROM drives were attached to the console

(Bottom right) Sherlock uses text to supplement the graphics and sound. It could, dare we say it, be presented a little more attractively

SHOOTING SHERLOCK

ICOM's Sherlock was produced much like a traditional feature film. ICOM developed a high resolution digitising process, with 512 x 256 resolution, to capture action filmed on studio sets. There was a cast of 35 (covering more than 50 speaking parts in the game), 70 costumes designed by a professional costumier, and 25 Victorian period sets were constructed for the game.

Actors were filmed both on set and against blue screens, to enable backgrounds to be dropped in later (as with Cinemaware's It Came From The Desert). The production was shot over a five-week period, with sound mixing done in San Francisco and post production in Chicago. 'Other developers,' claims ICOM's Ken Tarolla, 'are going to look at this software and realise that the door to creating new types of home entertainment has been opened.'



Psygnosis, quite sensibly, are keeping mum about this for the time being, but we can promise you a major ACE exclusive on their work in the very near future. However, we can reveal that the company's work uses a combination of fractals and compression to generate some stunning displays. This is the other side of the emerging CD technology, where the potential of the new medium is actually spurring companies on to develop even greater programming expertise. So some of the games we'll be playing this Christmas will leave even hardened console fans gasping for breath.

TIGER MEDIA

This Californian company are typical of a third breed of CD developer: those who simply take existing gameplay ideas and use the mass storage and improved sound of CD to deliver a better product. We've already covered *The Case of The Cautious Condor* in ACE (issue 42) – a graphic adventure situated on a luxury airliner in the 1930s.

'This title,' says President Laura Buddine, 'is 100 times larger in data and graphic capacity than any other title ever produced for any format. There are three hours of CD-audio, more than 700 originally drawn colour pictures, and 200K of program code.'

The other point about CD-ROM, which is especially apparent in Tiger Media's case, is that many softcos are perfecting development systems that are platform independent: in other words, an application developed for one CD machine can, with relatively little modification, run on another. Apart from the CDTV, *Condor* has already been released on FM Towns, and versions are under consideration for CD-I, CD-ROM XA and other systems.

This Christmas, then, the game you play on your CD-ROM PC will almost certainly be available for the CDTV as well as other CD machines.

BRAVE NEW GAMES

Not only are there going to be CD games featuring improved animation, improved programming, and broader scenarios, but there will also be games that explore alternative game styles. ACE readers have already been introduced to the *Cosmic Osmo* concept, where you explore a game universe without any particular objective other than to be amused. CD-ROM offers huge potential for this style of program, as Sierra are already demonstrating with their CD-ROM version of *Mother Goose*.

This children's title takes the basic *Osmo* concept and adds puzzling and songs to make a very refreshing gaming experience. The idea is to explore a fairy tale environment, encountering characters from nursery rhymes and performing certain tasks for them (e.g. finding Jack and Jill's pail). Success results in the singing of the nursery rhyme involved and the lyrics printing up 'karaoke-style' at the same time.

This probably sounds rather ghastly to some of you – and, come to think of it, the American cutesy voices ARE rather hard to stomach – but don't be misled. The actual experience of playing this game is very impressive and gives a powerful indication of how good CD software can be.

CD ABOUT TOWN

In the end, however, it's not just the games that's going to make CD so important to all of us. It's the fact that the same little plastic disks hold music, video, and data that makes them so promising. Imagine how much more widespread gaming would be if EVERYBODY had a floppy disk and a VDU in their sitting room – well, that's how it's going to be in the not-so distant future as CD technology spreads out from the hi-fi and links up to HDTV, your interactive CD player, and your portable Sony Data Discman.

In fact, the latter will be selling this year at around £250 and although it will not be CD-ROM compatible, the company claim that a version which you can hook up to a computer will follow. And with Sony and Nintendo developing a CD console together (see pages 71/73) CD really is on the move...

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE

(And a free holiday!)

French software house Delphine have enjoyed recent success with games like Future Wars and Operation Stealth. Now, in order to announce their newest release, Cruise for a Corpse, UK licenser US Gold is offering lucky ACE readers the chance to win an amazing free holiday in the Med.

Simply answer the questions shown here, fill out the coupon with your name and address etc, and mail it to: Cruise Competition, ACE Magazine, Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

The Games of Delphine

Future Wars

Future Wars takes place in the 43rd century. Earth is under attack from an alien race. Until now the formidable SDI system has kept the enemy attacks at bay. But now, the fiendish green men have hit upon a plan to travel back in time and sabotage the SDI system as it is being built!

The game starts in the present day when you stumble upon a secret message which will set you off on your adventure.

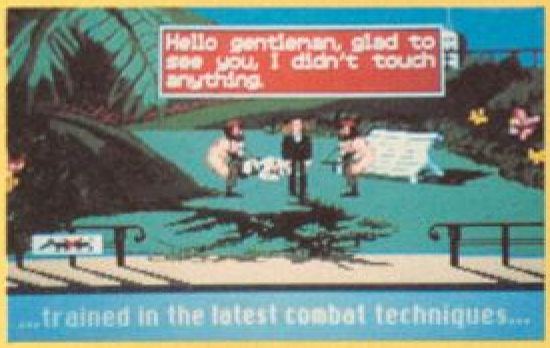
Throughout the game you have to visit the Middle ages, Prehistoric times and, of course, the distant future.

Using the Cinematique operating system, designed by Delphine's own Paul Culsett, Future Wars offers an extremely friendly use interface; allowing virtually all the action in the game to be controlled using point and click methods.

Winning umpteen awards (best overseas game at the In Din for example), *Future Wars* was the title that made Delphine's name.

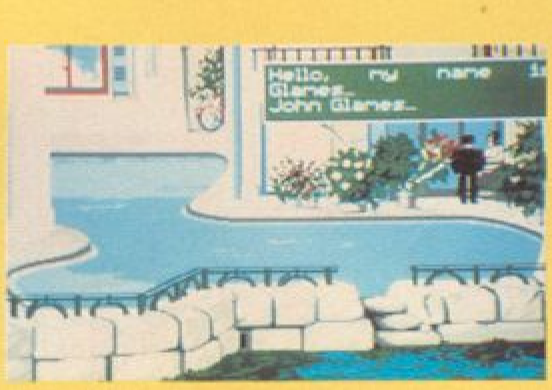
Operation Stealth

Operation Stealth enjoyed similar success on the Atari and Amiga. You play special agent John Glames, on a top secret mission to foil the evil doings perpetrated by an enemy superpower. Again, the control method and character interaction was recognised as first rate.

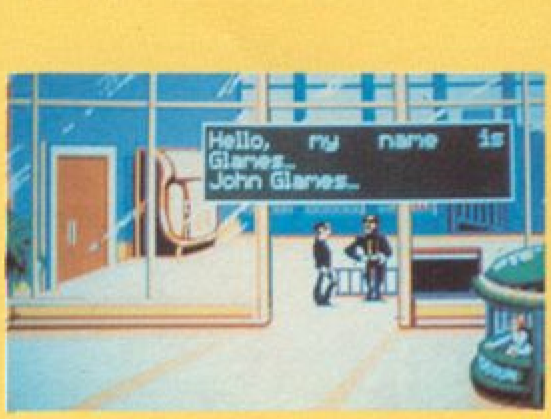


Hello gentleman, glad to see you, I didn't touch anything.

...trained in the latest combat techniques...



Hello, my name is Glames... John Glames...



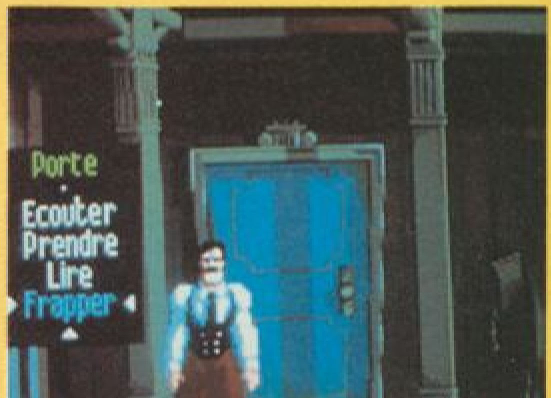
Hello, my name is Glames... John Glames...

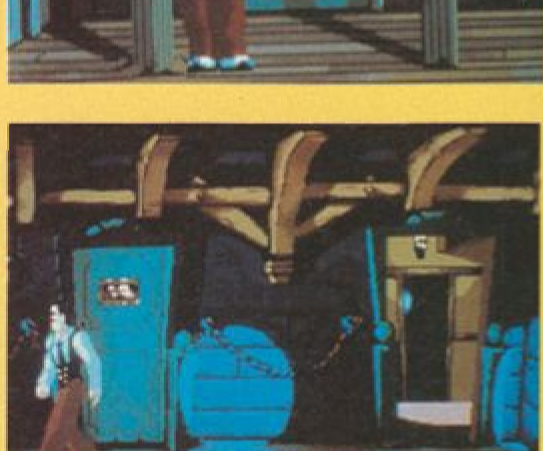
Cruise For A Corpse

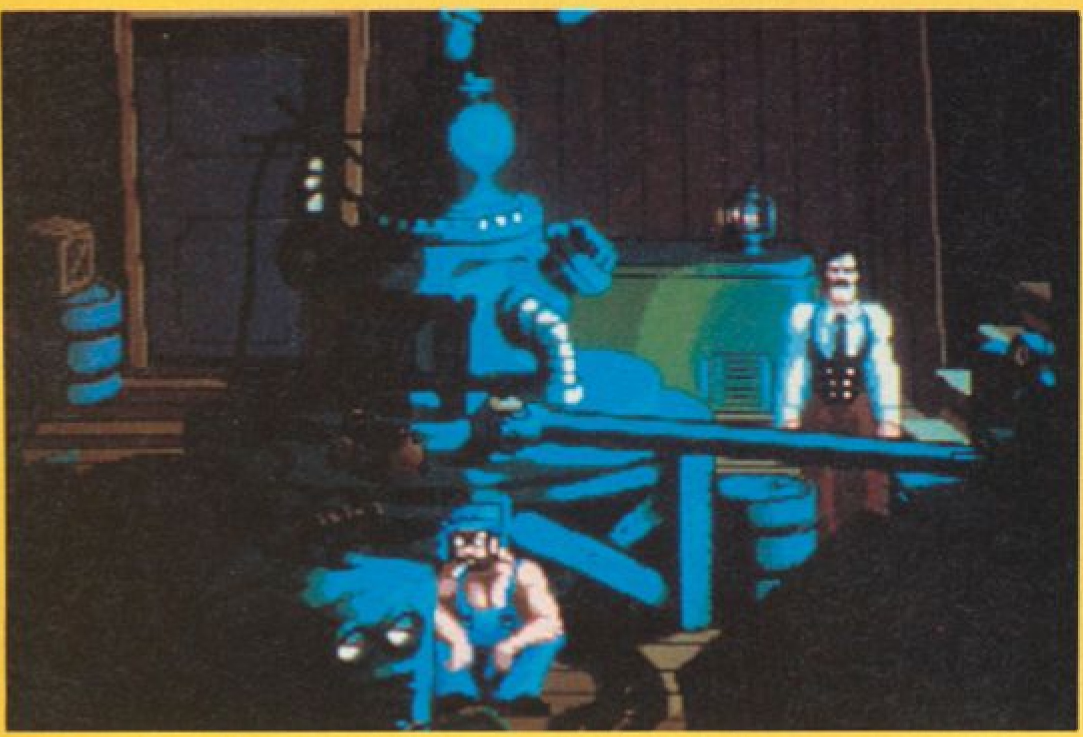
Cruise for a Corpse promises to be the best Delphine game yet, with further tweaks and touches being added to the control method and the storyline undergoing even more analysis. Set in the 1920's, the game takes place on board a yacht owned by shipping magnate Niklos Haraboudjan. You play inspectros Raoul Dussentier, who's been invited by Niklos to join him on a dream cruise in the Mediterranean.

Upon boarding the yacht, though, Raol is informed of a murder- but where is the body?!

Again, presented in easy-to-use mouse driven format, *Cruise for a Corpse* looks like being another success for Delphine!







Questions

1) Agatha Christies famous detective Poirot was from which country?

2) Name Mickey Spillane's wise-cracking detective.

3) In which author's books does Inspector Wexford appear?

THE PRIZE

And so, onto the prizes. US Gold and ACE are pleased to be able to offer the winner (and a friend) a holiday in the Mediterranean to the value of £500. You will be able to choose where you go, where you stay and for how long. It's all up to you. There are fifty runners up prizes of copies of A Cruise for A Corpse for Amiga, ST and PC owners.

NAME:..

ADDRESS:..

1)...

2)...

3)...

If I win a runner's up prize, I'd like Cruise for a Corpse on the
....computer.

RULES

All entries must reach us by the 8th April 1991. No employees of US Gold, Emap or Delphine are eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final and, aside from arranging the holiday for the 1st prize winner, no correspondence will be entrered into. Entry to this contest signifies understanding and acceptance of these rules.

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West Sussex
RH15 9PQ

Mindscape's 4D Sports Boxing is possibly one of the finest sports simulations around. In fact, Mindscape are so confident that one look at the game will persuade you to buy it, they're offering you a free demo. All you need to do is clip the coupon and mail it to the address shown below.

Within a couple of weeks you will receive a rolling demo of the game, highlighting all the key features and, of course, packed with thrilling boxing action.

THE GAME:

4D Boxing is a polygon driven simulation of the pugilistic art crafted by the same design team behind 4D Sports Driving, DSI. They're also working on a 4D Tennis simulation at the moment and have made a name for themselves as possibly the best filled-vector programmers in the business. The latest tweaks and changes to Boxing have made the animation even smoother than before, with extra frames being added giving boxers truely lifelike movement.

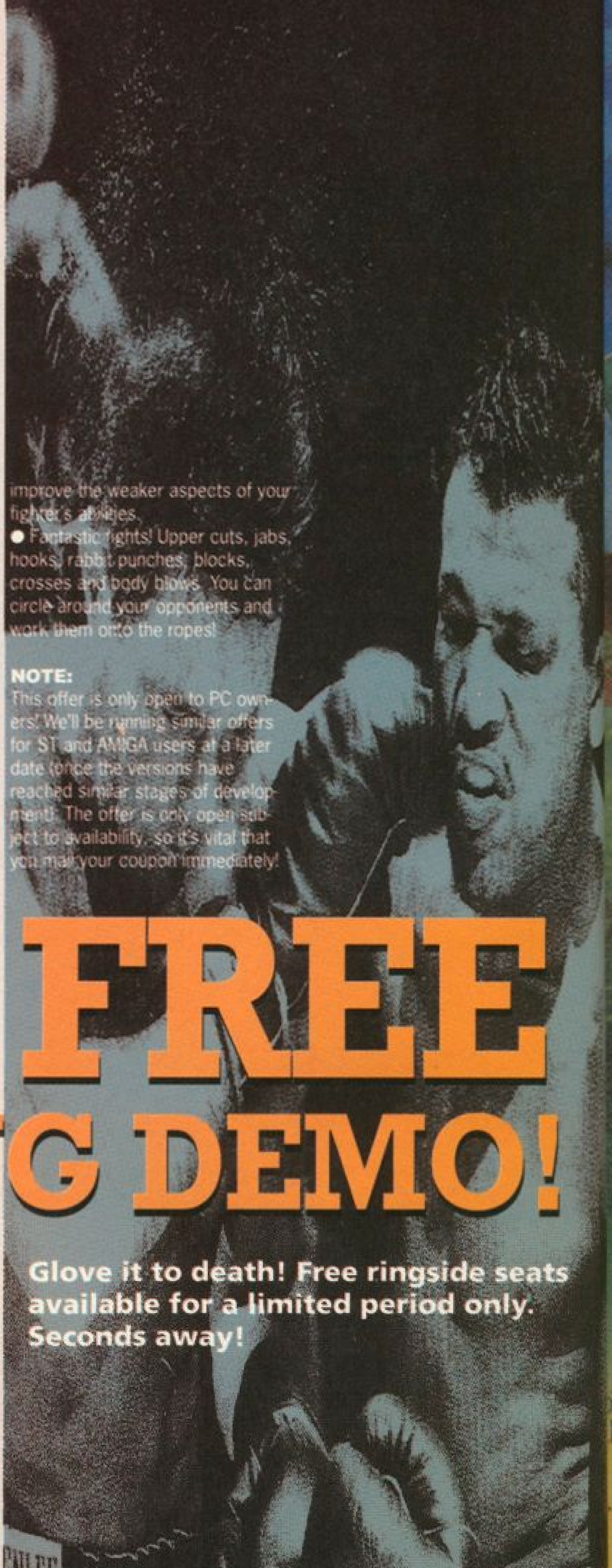
FEATURES:

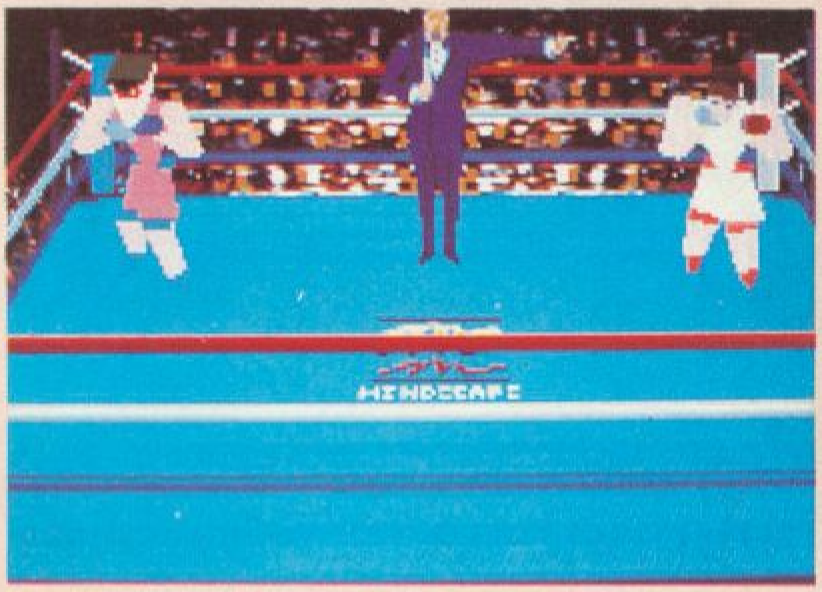
Boxing is loaded with more features than you can imagine. Some of the more interesting are:

- ● Create your own boxer! You choose his height, weight, colour, name and initial power, stamina and speed ratings.
- ● Fight any from a range of forty computer-controlled boxers, or play against a friend.
- IStunning 3D graphics and infinitely variable camera angles.
- ● Fight exhibition matches (against anyone) or embark on a career with the aim of becoming World Champion.
- ● Realistic training programme before a big fight allowing you to improve the weaker aspects of your fighter's abilities.
- ● Fantastic fights! Upper cuts, jabs, hooks, rabbit punches, blocks, crosses and body blows. You can circle around your opponents and work them onto the ropes!

NOTE:

This offer is only open to PC owners! We'll be running similar offers for ST and AMIGA users at a later date (once the versions have reached similar stages of development). The offer is only open subject to availability, so it's vital that you mail your coupon immediately!





'NAM

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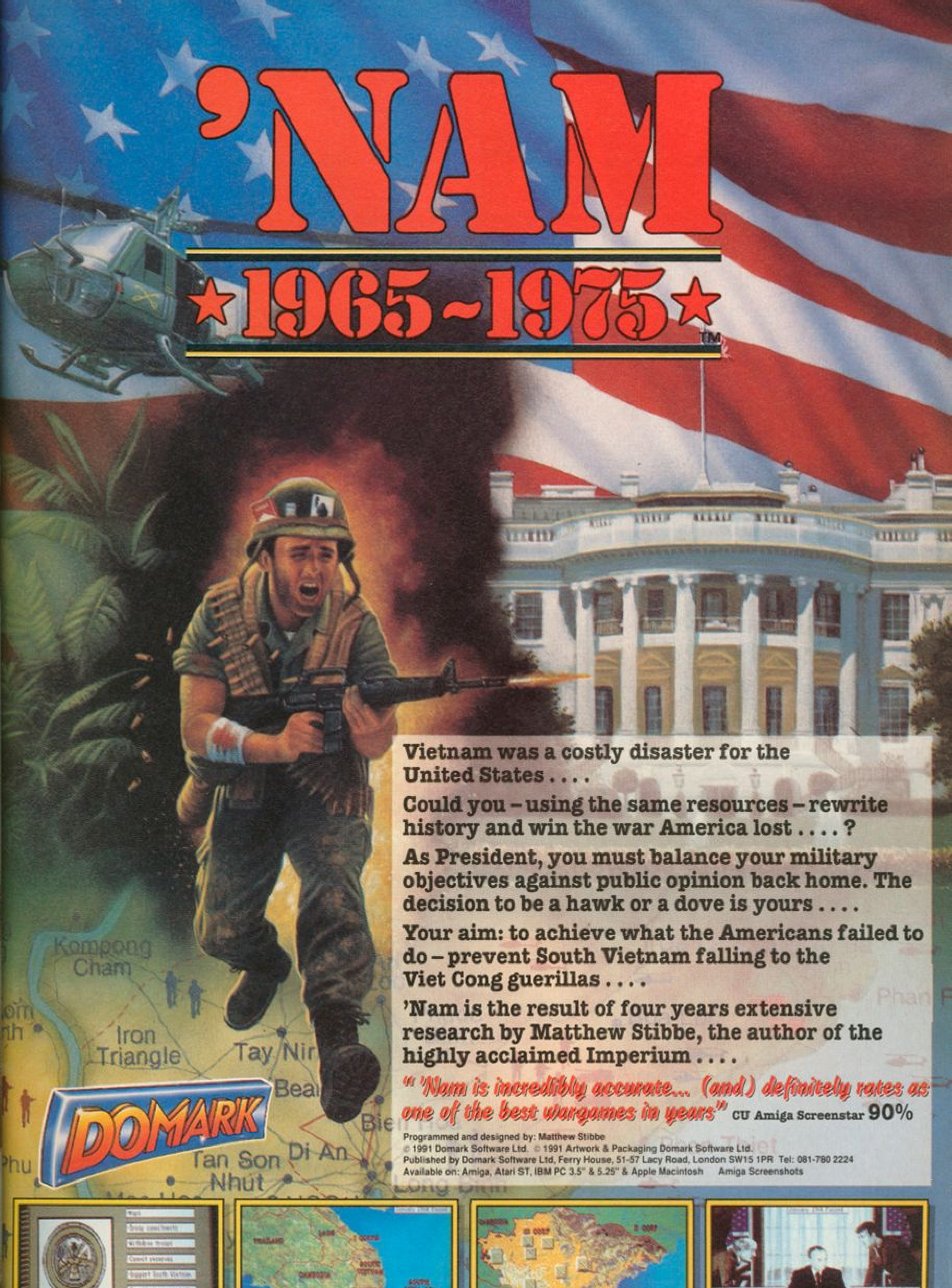
Kompong Cham
Iron Triangle
Tay Nir
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Vietnam was a costly disaster for the United States . . . .

Could you – using the same resources – rewrite history and win the war America lost . . . . ?

As President, you must balance your military objectives against public opinion back home. The decision to be a hawk or a dove is yours . . . .

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'Nam is the result of four years extensive research by Matthew Stibbe, the author of the highly acclaimed Imperium . . . .

" 'Nam is incredibly accurate... (and) definitely rates as one of the best wargames in years" CU Amiga Screenstar **90%**

DOMARK

Programmed and designed by: Matthew Stibbe

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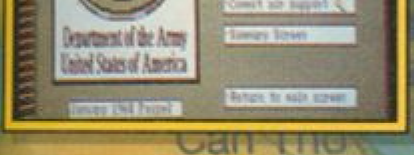
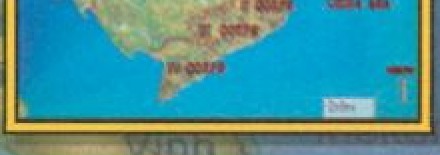
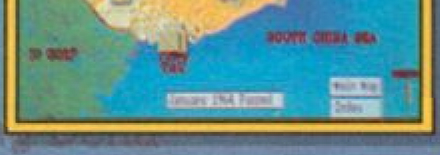
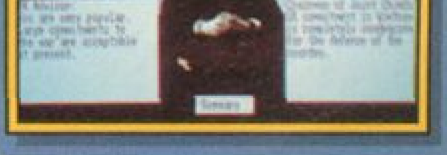
Published by Domark Software Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 081-780 2224

Available on: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25" & Apple Macintosh   Amiga Screenshots


Department of the Army
United States of America
Support South Vietnam


CAMBODIA
SOUTH CHINA SEA


SOUTH CHINA SEA
Main Map



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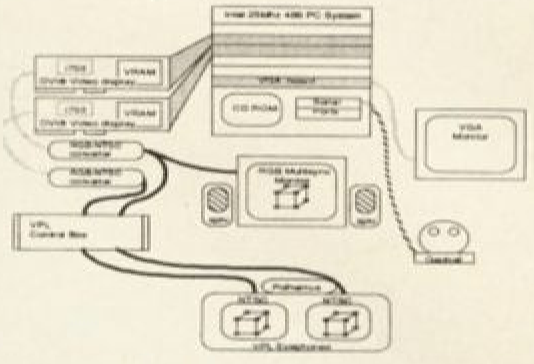
DEMONIAK LEANDER • + NINE PAGES OF PLAY TO WIN!

1990
Sense8
World tool

You don't need expensive headgear to use WorldToolKit – but it helps!



Here's a schematic diagram of the Intel/Sense8 DVI-VR product. The system was the result of a six month collaboration between the two companies and a special project at Intel under the guidance of Ken Pimentel. Apart from the elements shown, the 486 PC also uses a 360Mbyte hard disk (chunky, eh?). The DVI add-on units allow real-time texturing of up to 1300 polygons (each of 100*24bit pixels) a second and also adds a valuable 'portal' system to *WorldToolKit*, allowing very complex worlds to be developed by linking together individual 3D environments – similar to the system used by Incentive's *3D Construction Kit*

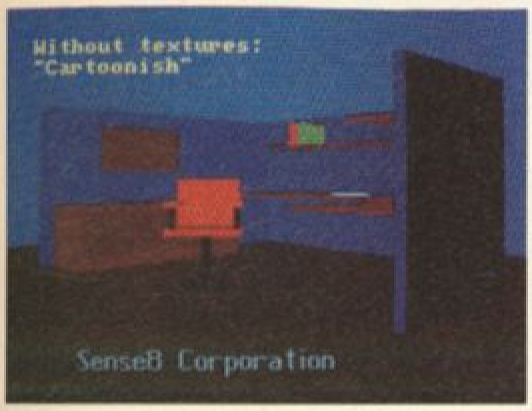
Sense8 sensation

A small company in California have come up with virtual reality system that incorporates the first Virtual Sprite Handler!

Virtual reality is expensive. You might think that you could knock together a reasonable portable headset using current LCD colour technology for around $2000. You'd be right. Unfortunately, most companies in the field are determined that you should pay at least $5000 – plus another $50000 for the rest of the gear. When are we going to get VR systems that you and I can play with?

Sooner than you think, if Sense8 have anything to do with it. The significance of this company for the penniless gamester is that they are currently the only people in the VR business who are committed to developing cheap VR. That means VR that runs on a PC and can be ported onto an Amiga. The PC versions are already in existence for just over £9000 – the Amiga versions and the price cuts are still in the future, but at least the process of bringing VR to the masses has started in earnest.

This mission began in January 1990 and is now located on a wharf just outside San Francisco, right next to the houseboat that meditating visionary Allan Watts used in the 1960s. The company was started by Eric Gullichsen and Pat Gelband, both of whom were principal programmers and hardware designers for the original *Autodesk* Cyberspace virtual reality project.



This is how conventional VR systems look – shaded polys make everything seem lifeless and cliched.

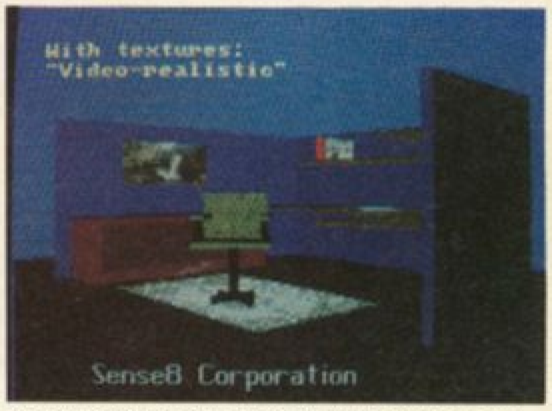
From the beginning, the byword was 'affordable'. Although £9K sounds like a depressing amount of pocket money, if we compare this to past price fluctuations we can expect to see a complete VR system for the price of an Amiga by the end of this decade – and one for the price of a good PC within three years. 'Our goal has always been real time 3D on desktop machines – inexpensive machines,' confirms Eric, who adds that Amiga implementations of their work is already a possibility.

WORLDTOOLKIT

Sense8's first major software product was released at the end of last year and is the world's first virtual reality toolkit, giving users the ability to create interactive 3D environments and then 'drive' them using whatever hardware they have to hand. That's the beauty of the system: it doesn't demand mega-expensive gloves and headsets – you can drive it with a mouse if you want to.

WorldToolKit is supplied as a library of C routines and performs four main tasks, all essential to VR creation (see *WorldTools* panel). However, and this is vital for gamesters, it also offers the possibility of determining the behaviour of elements within your environment. Yes, what we have here is the first Virtual Sprite Handler!

The games, we guess, may be a little while in coming. But Sense8 are just one flash in the storm of VR research currently rumbling across America. We're only a development meeting, a budget allocation, and a contract away from similar systems being implemented for the Amiga, the ST, and the Super Famicom. You have been warned...



Using DVI hardware, the Intel/Sense8 DVI-VR project has produced a system for around £9000 that not only performs real-time rendering, but real-time texturing as well. Images can be stored as textures and wrapped or layered onto objects – zoom in and look at that painting and you'll be amazed by the detail

WORLDTOOLS

Sense8's software is really four packages in one. First, it's a geometry reader. That means it can grab 3D objects created in *Sculpt*, *AutoCAD* or other programs and integrate them into your virtual world together with tools for dictating their behaviour in the new environment.

It's also a real-time renderer. This is a remarkable achievement in itself, allowing the 3D objects to be 'rendered' (i.e. given attributes of light, shade, texture using DVI hardware, and positional relativity) as you move about.

Next, it's the sensor drivers that allow you to hook up different tools, ranging from a simple mouse to the most complex datasuit, to your PC. If the real-time renderer is what gives the package its power, this module adds the flexibility.

Finally, it's a stereoscopic display generator for the different viewing options, one of the most practical ones being a small hood that fits over a monitor to give a very realistic 3D image.

Four levels of difficulty will help you to learn quickly - and optional autopilot landings will allow you to concentrate on airborne action. The controls are simple, effective, and easy to remember. It is a great flight sim for beginners and experts alike.

Fly missions in any of six real world arenas from the Persian Gulf to Vietnam, Central Europe to the Middle East and the North Cape to North Africa, giving you a total flying area of nearly half a million square miles.
Each area contains hundreds of missions and each mission will differ depending on your chosen tactics, even if you fly it twice!

IBM PC & Amiga screen shots

An amazing ten viewpoints give you the opportunity to view the fast flowing 3-D environment from virtually anywhere around your plane - and a unique "Director" option can be used to automatically change the view for you, so that you're always looking right at the centre of the action.

The newest smart weaponry and laser-guided armaments are primed for launch - it's your job to make sure that you're in the right place at the right time, and avoiding the constant enemy attack being thrown at you.

Enemy pilots and missile crews act and react intelligently and quickly. Success depends on making the right moves - and making them fast. F15 Strike Eagle II puts you in the hottest seat of them all - Take a look for yourself.

F-15
STRIKE EA
II

F15 Strike Eagle II follows F19 and Gunship into the front line. The latest and

AIR SUPERIORITY

The F15 Strike Eagle is the latest in a long line of F15 Eagles, whose development began in the mid '60s. Originally conceived as an ultra-powerful, ultra-fast air-superiority fighter, the design has developed into an air-superiority fighter with ground-attack capabilities.

The F15 Strike Eagle is one of the fastest, most manoeuvrable, and most powerful military aircraft in the world. It has the capacity to carry the latest air-to-air and air-to-ground armament in addition to its 20mm cannon.

The latest version of the Strike Eagle is equipped with a sophisticated zoom FLIR/TV/Laser target tracking system that allows the pilot to see close up views (either TV or thermal) of the target at all times.

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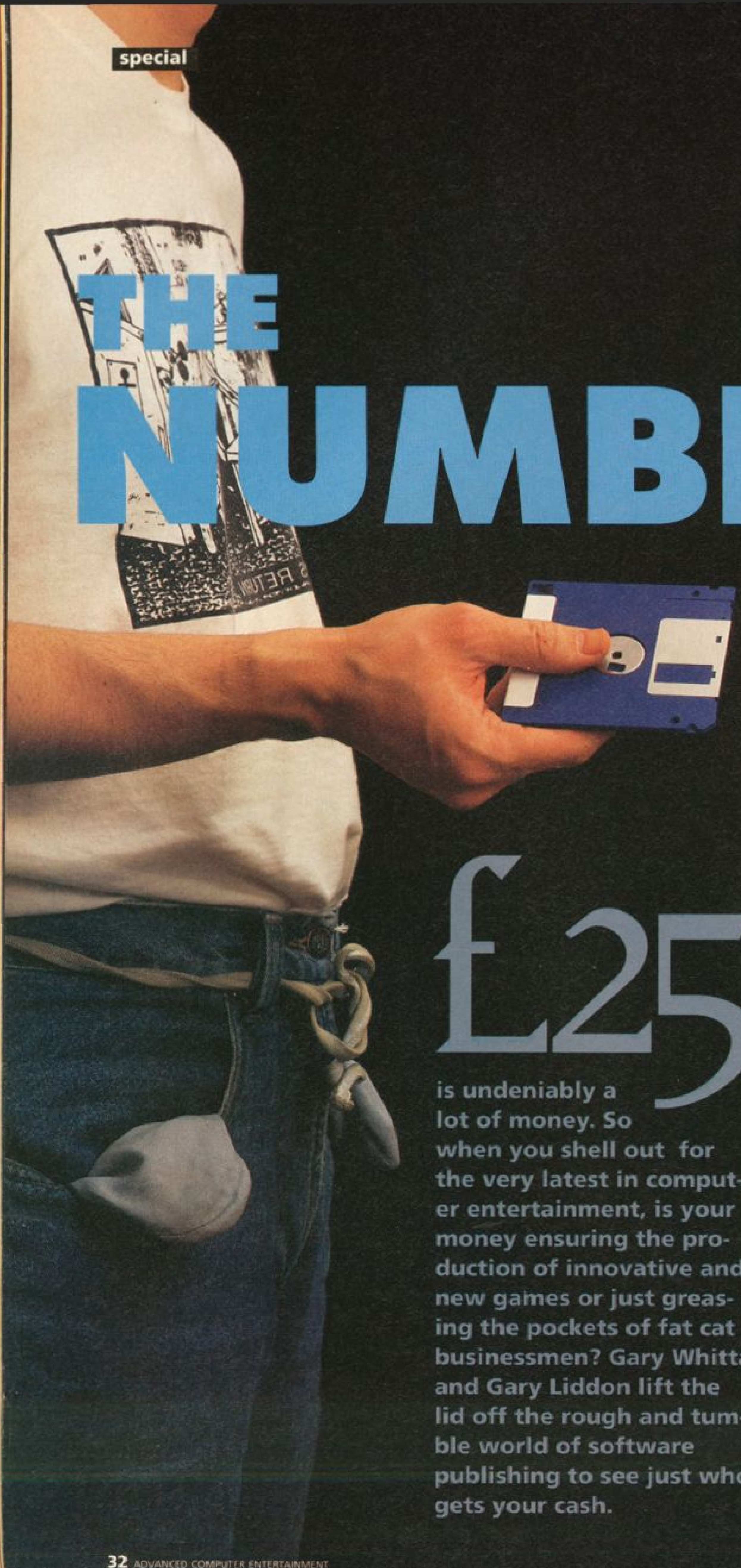
and est from MicroProse will soon be available for Commodore Amiga and Atari ST.



THE NUMBERS GAME

£25 is undeniably a lot of money. So when you shell out for the very latest in computer entertainment, is your money ensuring the production of innovative and new games or just greasing the pockets of fat cat businessmen? Gary Whitta and Gary Liddon lift the lid off the rough and tumble world of software publishing to see just who gets your cash.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

It's all very well devoting bags of time, money and effort to developing the game of the century, but it's all a bit pointless if the punters don't know anything about it. Enter one of the most complex, expensive - and crucial - factors in the key to software success - marketing.

Marketing is in fact a very tricky business, and because there are so many things that go into the marketing of a game, it's an expensive one too. Out of the 25 quid that the average software house charges for the average game, around £2.50 has been spent on marketing.

The concept of marketing, and what it does, is very simple. It's all about informing the public about the up-and-coming product, making it look tasty and, as a result, making the aforesaid punters want to buy it. The actual business of making that happen, however, is considerably more complex.

Advertising has always been the most popular way of getting the message across. On average, around one third of a typical computer magazine is made up of advertising, with a single colour page selling for anything up to £1500. For more elaborate ads (such as the three-page extravaganzas used to push *Midwinter* last year), the prices start to look like telephone numbers (although not very long ones). This may seem like an awful lot of moolah so let's see just how the computer mags measure up against some other famous periodicals.

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MAG	CIRCULATION	PRICE PER PAGE
DR WHO MONTHLY	21,363	£600
THE ONE	44,065	£1,195
ACE	48,170	£1,295
MAYFAIR	295,646	£2,800
VIZ	1,018,752	£7,400
RADIO TIMES	2,771,711	£17,000

But while advertising does the job to an extent, it's the other two-thirds of the typical computer magazine that the software companies are really interested in - editorial. But of course while a company can rant and rave all it likes about its own game, getting a magazine to do the same thing isn't quite so easy - they do have to be impartial, after all. But at least good editorial, while less consistently enthusiastic than the ads, is free. Or is it?

Software houses want good reviews - and they're prepared to pay. We're not talking about large envelopes stuffed full of used notes passing hands or anything as sinister as that, but anything a software house can do to tilt a journalist's opinion, however slightly, in favour of a game, is surely worth a few extra quid. Press launches, parties, special events, trips abroad, wining and dining, competitions... it all adds up, and it all comes out of the marketing budget.

And let's not forget the product itself, of course. Box artwork, design, manuals and documentation - they all have to look good and put across the right image, or the show's off. And whatever's left after those cash-exhaustive activities are out of the way goes into things like T-shirts, point-of-sale material in shops (cardboard stand-ups, posters etc), and any other little sales gimmicks the software house can think of.

PRODUCTION

Duplication of a 16-bit disk costs around 34p. For a typical all-formats duplication of around 60,000 this costs £20k allowing for bulk discounts etc. Even after you've paid the programmers, placed the ads and wined and dined the journos,it's still a case of forking out right up until the last minute. Onto this figure, manual design (£2-3k), box production and registration cards must be added.

POINTS OF VIEW

Top games executive and long-serving industry veteran Andrew Wright doesn't believe that licensed product is the only way forward if the world of computer entertainment is to continue to be successful. "It would be a very sad industry if we didn't bother with original product," he says. "It's like saying don't make films, or don't paint pictures." But surely licensed product is where all the real money is? "Not necessarily," argues Wright. "Look at something like *Populous*. With original product you can licence it out to cartridge companies like Nintendo and so on - with a licensed product you can't do that."

And what about all these poor programmers penniless in the gutter, then? "Well, I'd like to meet some of these programmers, because they certainly don't get stitched up by us," Wright retorts. "A programmer should always go to a lawyer with any contract that he is offered - a lot of them just sign it without reading it properly."

Does Wright feel that developers should be paid more or less? "Well, I think that the development companies should be paid less, but the individual programmers that work for them should be paid more. But for now I think we've got the balance just about right."

Tony Beckwith from Image Works says that obviously original product is more speculative than film and arcade licenses. So why do original product? "If you have a winner like *Falcon*, the rewards for both publisher and programmer can be far greater. It sold 200,000 which has got to make it one of the biggest-selling flight sims ever."

Even so, the slice that the publishers get of the pie is much larger than that that fills the programmers coffers, so is that fair? "Well, we do take a big risk, you've got to remember that. What's more we offer sliding royalty rates for the best name programming teams which means that if they create a massive hit they'll certainly be feeling the benefit. Once we've recovered our initial risk why shouldn't the developer get a better rate?"

OVERALL FIGURES

Here we look at how your twenty-five pounds splits up on an average-selling computer game on the ST and Amiga. Obviously the phrase "average-selling" is a bit on the vague side of ambiguous and it's very hard to get software publishers to commit to any figures. Off the record it's another matter and a quick poll from a few major software publisher elicited figures of around 30,000 combined sales for the ST and Amiga. We took the royalty rate for the programmer to be around the 20% mark though that figure has been disputed by a number of software authors.

SPEAKING FAST AND LOOSE:

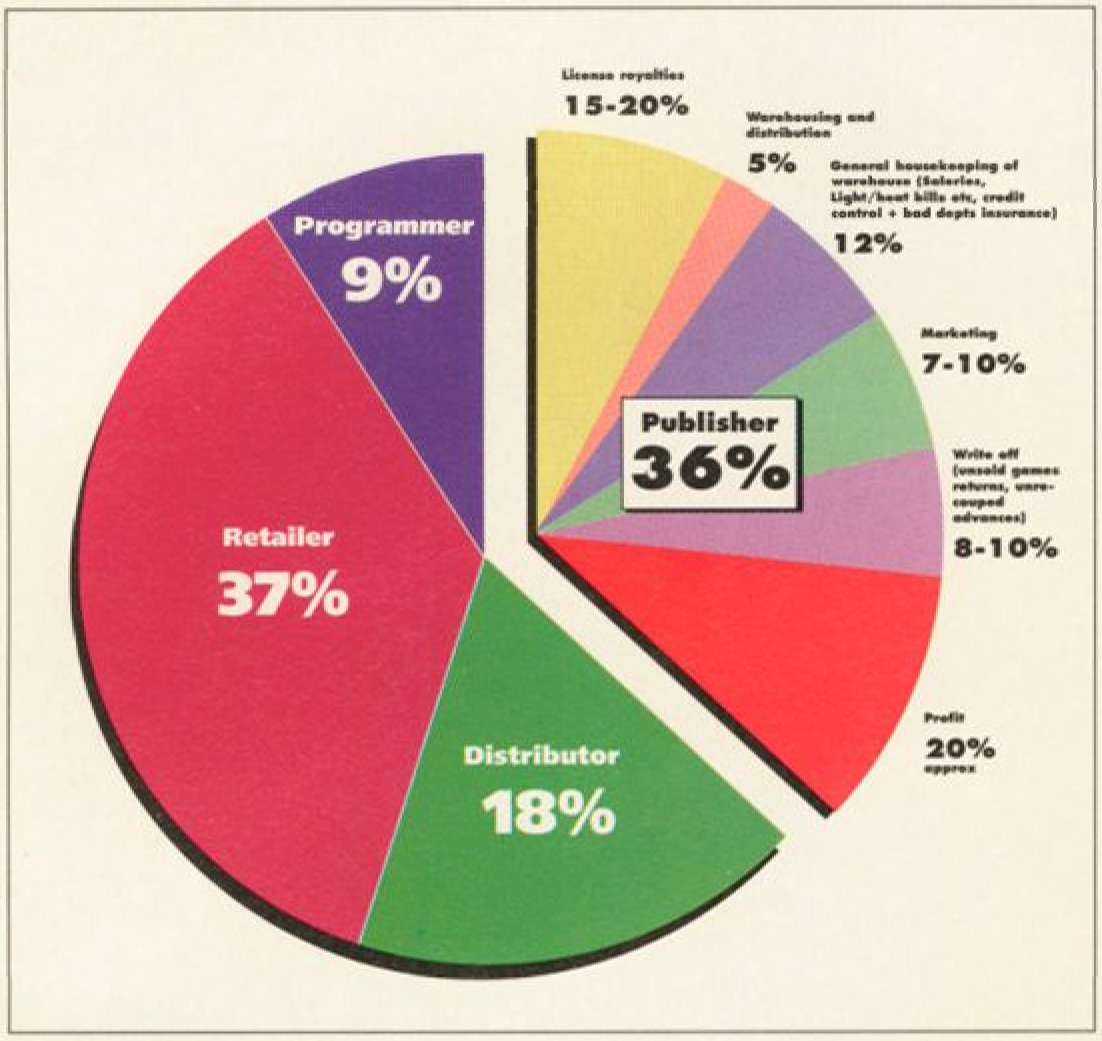
Some views from around the software world from people who'd rather not have their names mentioned.

"85% of the profit is made from 15% of your product. It's like betting on horses, some come in winners and they pay for ones that don't"
Major Label Product Manager

"Return on investment must be at least 20% otherwise you might as well just stick in into stocks and bonds. If you stick a £100,000 in you want at least £120,000 back"
Director of a prominent software house.

"The whole thing is just so ridiculous. If the distributors and retailers weren't so greedy and didn't ask for such a large profit margin I'm sure the end users would buy games in greater quantities. And if you ask anyone why they ask for the profit margins they do then they won't be able to tell you. They just do it because everybody else does"
Seriously Disgruntled Software House Supremo

"There's a lot of creative accounting going on"
Programmer



◀ **Where the money goes. This breakdown of the typical £25 outlay (compiled from various sources) details the outgoings of an average software house. With a measly 20% of the 36% gross left for profit, it's pretty tight all round.**

PROGRAMMER SCRATCHES PORSHE SHOCK HORROR

Despite the archetypical glamour-boy image generally associated with computer programming, for the rank and file of games creators nothing could be further from the truth. Of the £25 that you fork out for the latest top game on average about only 7% of that revenue will end up in the programmer's pocket.

Even so, if the game is a big hit that still sounds like quite a nice bit of bunce. But speak to any programmer or development house, and they'll certainly tell you otherwise.

So who's right? We asked Peter Molyneux, leading light at top development house Bullfrog if he thought programmers got a fair deal.

"No they don't. They are, after all, the ones that are creating the product. The average programmer deal is more like eight per cent. The best deal I know of in the whole world ever is a programmer who is getting 22 per cent."

Despite his belief that programmers, on the whole, get a raw deal, Molyneux thinks that it's still possible for developers to be successful - even though it is unlikely. And even some of the most successful development houses are having to survive on a shoestring budget. "About half of the money we earn has to go straight back in to developing our next game. The other half goes into general housekeeping - paying the bills, rent and so on. I can't tell you off the top of my head how much it costs to run Bullfrog for a month, but it isn't cheap."

In an ideal world, Molyneux would like to see programmers getting a 25% royalty deal as standard - and he believes that day may not be too far off as the developers themselves become more professional in their approach. "They key thing to remember is that you're only as good as your last success," he adds.

The story isn't all that very much different for Graftgold and Andrew Braybrook, one of their senior coders, certainly echoes many of Peter Molyneux's sentiments. Are software developers paid a fair proportion of the revenue generated by the games they write?

"Of course not. On the whole there are two sorts of deal that we get involved in, conversions and original titles. Conversions usually work with the publisher providing all your development costs up front but with no royalties, those deals bring in regular money but you can't get very rich doing that. Original products take a lot longer to do and the advances nowhere near pay for the product's development and you have to wait for the royalties to come in to pay for the game's development. In both cases late payments cause an awful lot of hassle."

So it seems that what you're saying is that despite the rewards for original product being far greater, you're pushed into doing conversion work just to keep your cash flowing and the proverbial wolf from the door?

"Yes. You're payed on milestones and the amount of time spent designing original product is very hard to put that down as a milestone payment. For original product you need a lot of time on RD (research and development) and trying out things that don't work and publishers seem very unwilling to fund this stage of development. They wan't to see something on screen, and sometimes seem to show very little vision. It's very difficult and because of that we have to do conversions to fund the development time on an original product.

'We've got ten people here at the office and those are regular outgoings so we have to have to regular income. If someone's working at home there's very little overhead and they can withstand the ups and downs a lot more."

So why not take the initiative CORE have and branch into the publishing side of things yourselves?

"Well, we're looking very closely at what Renegade are doing because that offers a chance for software developers to get one step nearer to publishing their own material. The deal they're offering sounds very reasonable but for that we need some capital. At the moment it's best that we try and build up some revenue."

There are a few however who have managed to earn a tidy sum from producing original software, the most successful probably being the Cambridge-based team of Dave Braben and Ian Bell who are rumoured to have received around a million pounds in revenue generated by their computer classic *Elite*. Even so, many feel that those days are long gone and the future is a bleak and desperate place for those wishing to develop innovative product on 16-bit computers.

POINTS OF VIEW: CORE DESIGN

Veteran development firm Core Design, the team behind a tring of successful projects for other companies like *Rick Dangerous*, *Dynamite Dux* and *Impossamole*, last year shocked the entire software world by going into business as a standalone software publisher. Unlike many other prospective publishers that fade into obscurity, Core actually did very well for itself, with its first game *Corporation* zipping straight to the top of the charts. Bearing this in mind, we assumed that they must be doing something right and had a chat with top man Jeremy Smith.

So why this going alone business then? Was it really that bad as a developer? "Not at all. We were coining it in - in fact we're still turning work away now. No, we just wanted to broaden our experiences. Of course there's more money in it, but that's only true if you get it right."

Now Core employs its own team of full-time in-house programmers who get what by all accounts seems to be a very good deal. "All our development people are paid a good regular salary, and on top of that they get monthly bonuses AND royalties," explains Smith. So is Core making more now than it was as a developer? "Erm... not yet. But we will be soon. We're not driving around in Ferrarris or anything like that - yet."

THE VERDICT

So in the end, just where does your money actually go? In the till. When all of the pounds, shillings and pence are added up it seems that the only people really laughing are the retailers. That's Smiths, Boots and dozens of independent software shops littering the highstreet.

Perhaps predictably, no one individual; neither Porsche-driving programmer or running-dog capitalist software baron ends up with all your cash. From the initial cash-rich boom of the mid-Eightites, the software biz has calmed down into sensible, everyday business. Perhaps not quite the trauma-riddled money pit which softcos would have us imagine, but equally it's not the gigantic money-spinning rip-off the game buyer often fears.

Winner!

Mindscape's incredible portfolio of computer games goes from strength to strength. The accolades heaped on Captive justify its position as 'Overall Game of the Year 1990' and 'Adventure Game of the Year 1990' - both voted by the UK Computer Game Industry.

Captive has achieved true cult status by going on to win the Tilt D'or in France. Amiga Format Magazine voted it Role-Playing Game of the Year. Captive is Ace rated 930, classified Zzap! Sizzler, a C&VG Hit, a Commodore User Screen Star - the list goes on.

Currently available on the Amiga and the ST. Captive will be released for the PC in April.

Mindscape International Ltd, The Coach House, Hooklands Estate, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex RH17 7NG. Tel: 0444 831 761.

ST FORMAT GOLD

ACE RATED

SIZZLER

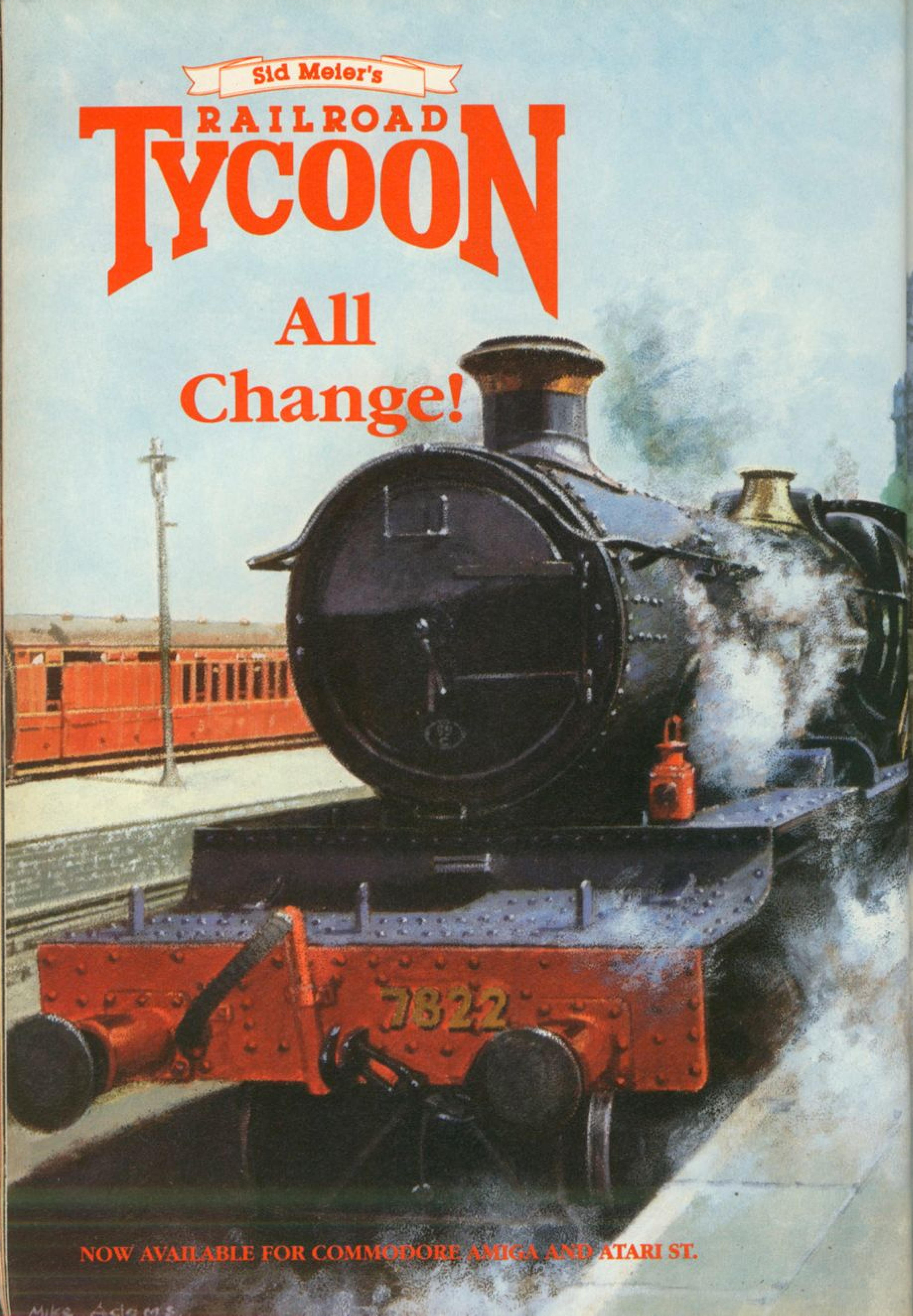
GOLD

CU SCREEN STAR

C+VG HIT!

Captive
MINDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL

MINDSCAPE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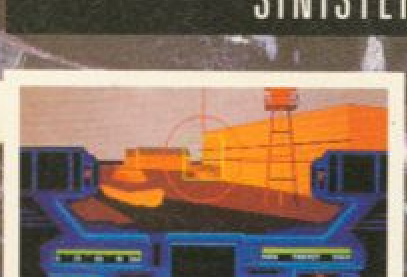
Screen Shots: Atari ST version



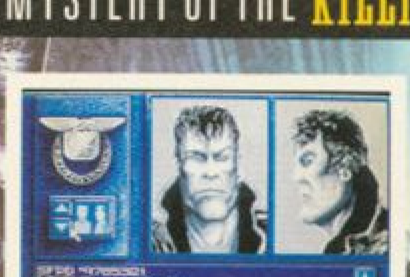


image WORKS

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VEKTOR Grafix Ltd

We Want INFORMATION!

Q&A

In order to make ACE even better, we want to ask you all sorts of personal questions. And for your trouble? The chance to win one of TEN bundles of £50 worth of software for your computer.

We hope you're enjoying reading this issue of ACE. However, there are probably things which you would like to see more of, some things which you really don't like and others that you just don't read. So, to help us produce exactly the right magazine for you, we're giving you the chance to tell us what you want. So, tick the boxes, fill in the blanks and send this page (or a copy) to: **ACE Survey, Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.** In order to be entered for the Prize Draw, your entries must reach by the 31st March.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1) Are you Male ☐ or Female ☐

2) How old are you?
- Under 12 ☐
- 12-16 ☐
- 17-18 ☐
- 19-20 ☐
- 21-25 ☐
- 26-30 ☐
- Over 30 ☐

3) Are you:
- At college ☐
- At university ☐
- In full time employment? ☐
- In part time employment? ☐
- None of these? ☐

4) Do you buy ACE
- Occasionally ☐
- Often ☐
- Every issue ☐

5) Which of the following computers do you own or are likely to buy in the next 12 months?
- Amiga ☐
- C64 ☐
- Apple MAC ☐
- Spectrum ☐
- Amstrad CPC ☐
- PC ☐
- Nintendo 8-Bit ☐
- Gameboy ☐
- Super Famicom ☐
- Sega Master System ☐
- Sega Megadrive ☐
- Sega Gamegear ☐
- Atari ST ☐
- Atari Lynx ☐
- PC Engine ☐
- Neo Geo ☐
- Other (*please specify*)

6) Which of the following items do you own or are planning to buy?
- Modem ☐
- Midi Interface ☐
- Video Camera ☐
- Audio CD Player ☐
- Record Deck ☐
- CD Rom Drive ☐
- Video Recorder ☐

7) Rate the following items in this month's magazine in order of preference (0-10)

Tech News *p.7-9* ....
Games News *p.10-12* ....
Reviews *p.44-70* ....
Software Features *p.68* ....
Hardware Features *p.29* ....
Industry Features *p.22-24* ....
Pinks *p.89-130* ....
Tricks'n'Tactics *p.77-81* ....
Letters *p.15-17* ....
Coin-ops *p.84-85* ....
Competitions ....

8) Do you read the Pink Pages
- Yes ☐
- No ☐

9) How often would you use the pink pages when buying hardware/software?
- Not very often. ☐
- Quite often. ☐
- Always. ☐

10) How interested are you in the ACE Stockmarket?
- Not at all interested ☐
- Quite interested. ☐
- Very interested. ☐

11) What do you think of ACE's hardware coverage?
- Not enough. ☐
- Too much ☐
- Just right. ☐

12) Do you use your machine for anything other than games?
If yes please specify.

....
....
....

Continued overleaf ➤

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

13) Do you usually buy your software from:
- WH Smith ☐
- Boots ☐
- Menzies ☐
- Local Shop ☐
- Woolworths ☐
- Newsagent ☐
- Mail order ☐

14) How much money do you spend on software each month ?
- Under £15 ☐
- £15-25 ☐
- £25-35 ☐
- More than £35 ☐
- More than £50 ☐

15) How many other people have looked at or read this copy of ACE?
- None ☐
- 1 ☐
- 2 ☐
- 3 ☐
- 4 or more ☐

16) Which of these other computer magazines do you read?

Computer and Video Games	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Zzap 64	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
CU Amiga	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Your Sinclair	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Sinclair User	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Crash	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
The One	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Zero	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
New Computer Express	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Raze	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Amiga Format	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Amiga Action	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
ST Format	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
ST Action	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
PC Leisure	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐
Mean Machines	NEVER ☐	OCCASIONALLY ☐	OFTEN ☐

17) How do you rate the ACE Hotline?
- Very poor. ☐
- Okay. ☐
- Very good ☐

18) Is there anything you'd like to hear on the ACE Hotline that isn't there already?

....

....

....

....

19) Are you interested in buying ACE merchandise (T-shirts, binders etc)?
- Yes ☐
- No ☐

20) What Free Gifts would you like to see on ACE?
- Tricks'n'Tactics Supplements ☐
- Calendars/Posters ☐
- Scratch-card competitions ☐
- Badges ☐

Other. Please specify.

....

....

21) Any other comments ?

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....

If I win, I'd like some software for the

....machine

Name:...

Address:...

....

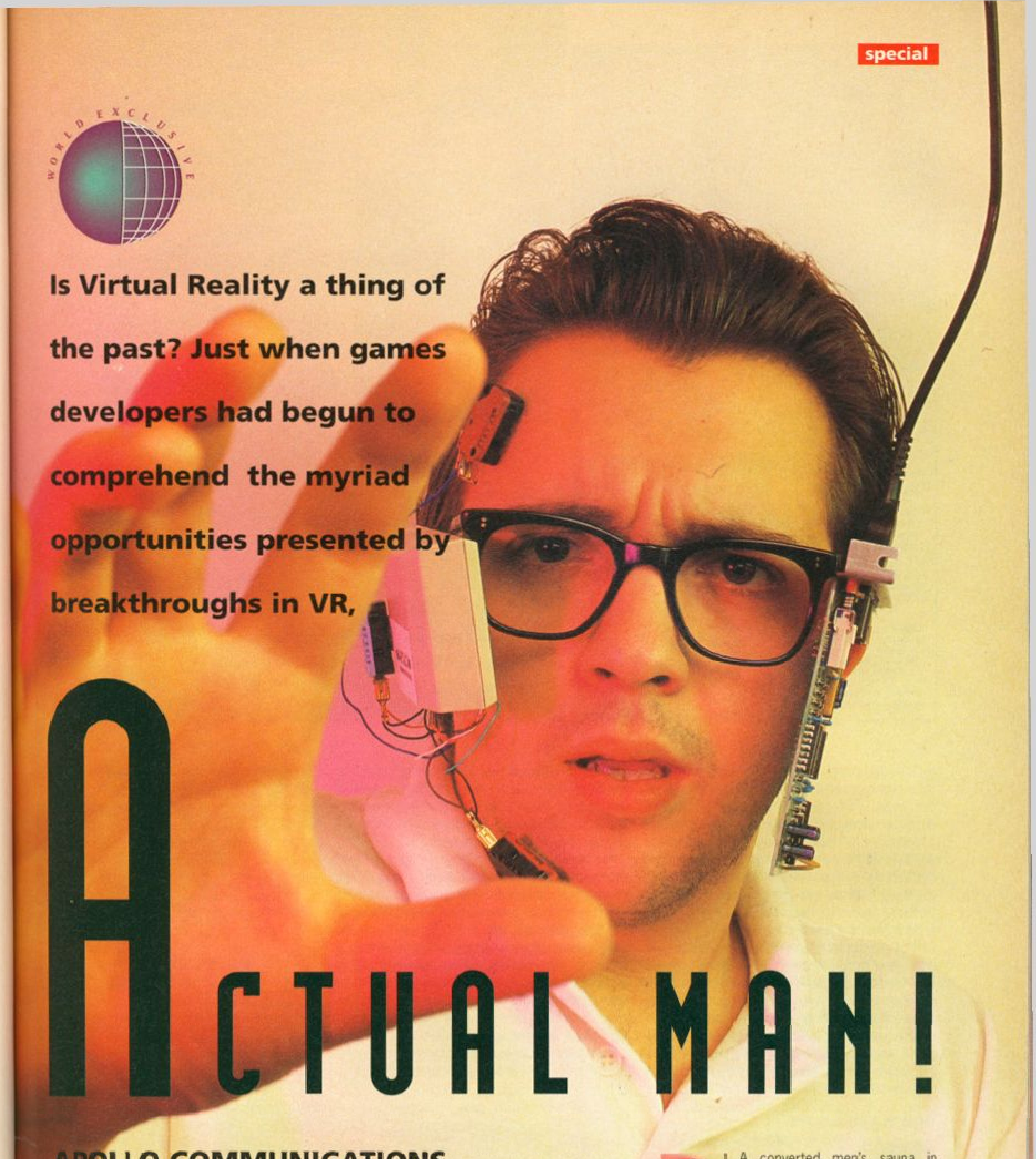
....

....

CORPORATION
FINAL WHISTLE
AMIGA
DATA
DELUXE PAINT III
PAL
WISHBRINGER
ANIMATION
GRAFFITI MAN
ROGUE TROOPER
TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
HOORAY for HENRIETTA
Amiga

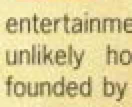
WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Is Virtual Reality a thing of the past? Just when games developers had begun to comprehend the myriad opportunities presented by breakthroughs in VR,



ACTUAL MAN!

APOLLO COMMUNICATIONS pull the rug from under their feet. ACE reveals the stunning secrets behind Actual Reality!

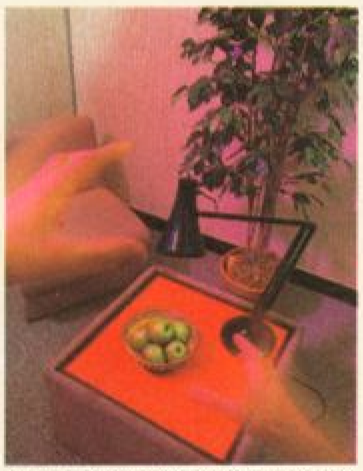


A converted men's sauna in South Wales is not the most likely place you'd expect to find what could be the most amazing new development in computer entertainment since the last one. It's the unlikely home to Apollo Communications, founded by managing director, chief engineer and sole employee Vince Tyrell. For the last year he has been working on this incredible Actual Reality Sensery Environment, or 'A.R.S.E.', and - out of the blue - invited ACE to take a look.

Boyo

The A.R.S.E. is light years ahead of any other VR system yet seen. The speed, detail and realism of the images generated by ☞

Vince Tyrell, creator of the awesome Actual Reality system.



'The Living Room', currently Vince's only fully-working Actual Reality environment.

Sim fans will no doubt already be salivating at the prospect of almost life-like experiences from future games. This is an out-of cockpit view of your plane in *F36 Reverberator*, a proposed flight-sim in development.

Here's what Top Flight industry bigwigs - who have asked to remain anonymous - are saying:

"We've got a development meeting next week. Vince is coming round to show us his A.R.S.E."

"If this guy's A.R.S.E. turns out to be as big as he claims, we're definitely interested"

"I don't want to commit to anything yet, but rest assured that we'll be carefully looking into Vince's A.R.S.E."

"Hmm. An interesting concept. I like the sound

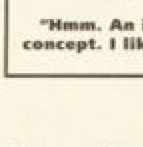
"I've been looking at the competing VR systems, and none of them can lick my A.R.S.E.!"

Vince Tyrell

the machine are quite literally fantastic - just take a look at some of the astounding photos on this page. What you can't tell from these static shots is how realistically all the non-visual aspects are modelled as well. Every sound and smell is stunningly reproduced. Touch an object and you can feel its surface texture and temperature. Pick it up and the object's weight and dynamics are exactly simulated. If you didn't know better, you'd swear it was real.

Vince stresses the full potential of the A.R.S.E. has barely been explored and it still has quite a bit of work to be done on it, such as shrinking the hardware to a portable size and casing design. But Vince is confident that, finances permitting, everything is on schedule for the anticipated April 1992 launch. Believe us, it'll be worth the wait. As Vince says, "My A.R.S.E. is unbelievable!"

INSIDE THE A.R.S.E.



Vince is justifiably proud of his A.R.S.E., and is naturally a little reticent about giving too many details of the technical specifications - his system is far and away superior to anything else in development by companies such as W Industries and VPL. When pushed he did offer this, "Basically, it's all very complex."

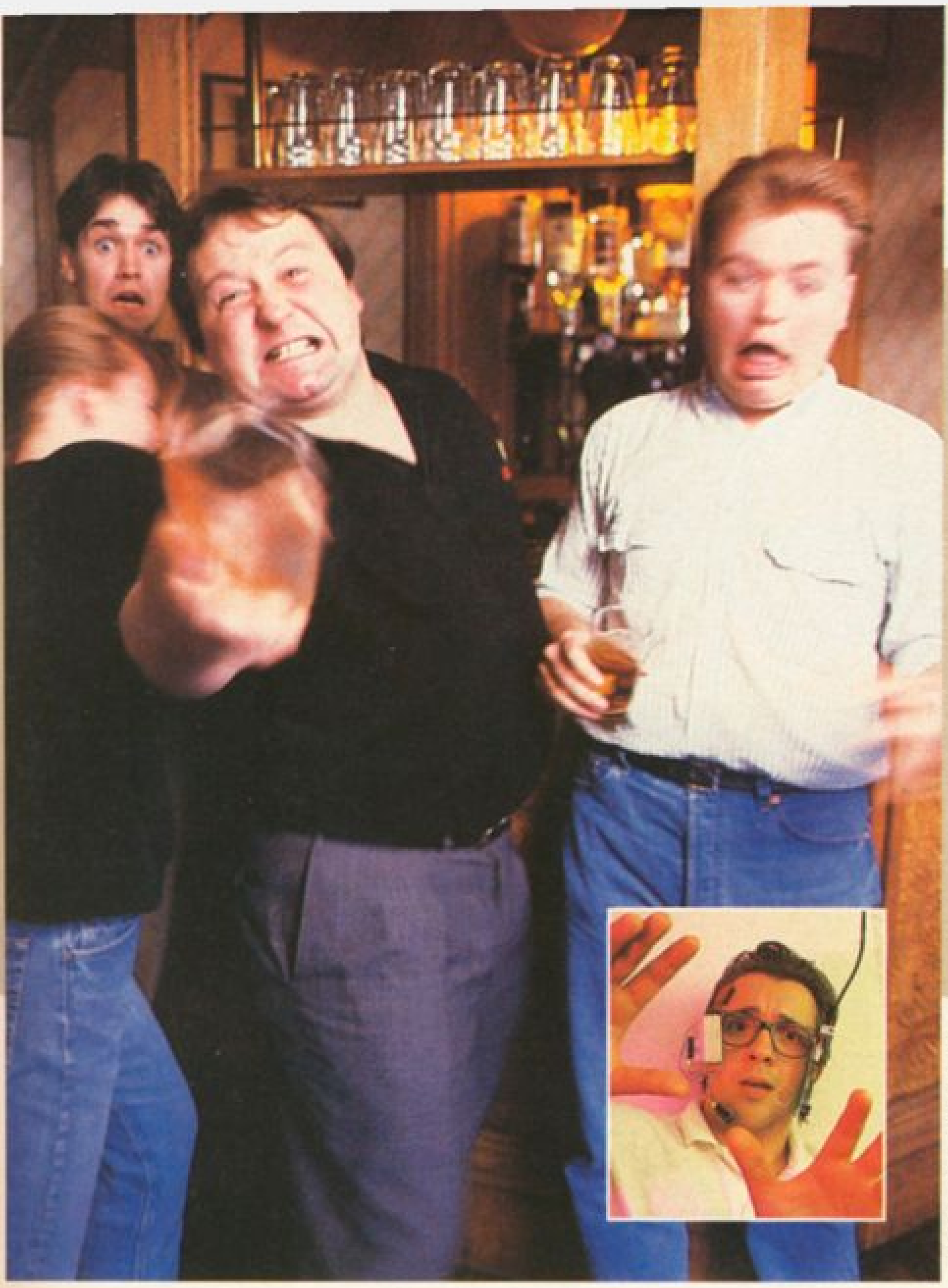
The most immediately stunning aspect of the system is its graphics capabilties. All the objects in the 'game world' are modelled from polygons, just like the 3D graphics found in most games, although far more advanced. Vince eagerly reels of a stream of highly impressive statistics, "It can generate around 40 million polygons per second (using a blitter adapted from the design used in the Amiga), each of which is any one of over 64 million colours, which is far more than even the Amiga in HAM mode. Image update takes place every 50th of a second to ensure maximum realism."

But the A.R.S.E. can do far more than just generating high-end graphics. Using a unique and revolutionary nerve-induction technique based on carefully-controlled microwave beams transmitted into the brain, the A.R.S.E. can trick the brain into hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling anything the programmer requires. This approach has resulted in a complete VR system with all the necessary hardware, bar the complex computer centre, fitting into a compact lightweight headset.

Portability has been one of Vince's main objectives. The computer centre and headset commu-

Inside the stunning ► 'Living Room'. As you can see from this shot sequence the room model features textured objects and realistic ray-traced shading. Watch your hand actually reach out to the fruit bowl, pick up an apple and then bring it to your 'mouth'. Why not take a bite? Crunch! Delicious! The playtester (bottom) scrutinises the juicy morsel before tucking in.

This huge computer is the force driving the system. *Vince assured ACE that* "this will be compressed using customised chips so that it can all fit in a shoebox" ready for the system's intended launch in April 1992. ▼



The proposed *Pub Fighter* game. It's so sophisticated that you'll drink and actually feel as if you're getting drunk. The more you drink the more aggressive you'll get. There are different fight scenarios, such as 'Did you spill my pint?' or 'That's my girl you're looking at'. Playtesters (inset) have complained of real bruises and hangovers after a long play session.

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

Vince sees the main application for the A.R.S.E. being entertainment, and has several game ideas in development. He enthuses, "The realism of my A.R.S.E. is incredible. Play *Actual Tennis* and you'll finish a set tired out and with blisters on your hand from the racket." The high level of realism does have its drawbacks though; the planned *M25 Frogger* and *Rottweiler Attack* have had to be scrapped.

Vince also sees 'adult' entertainment possibilities, and is working on some '18+' game modules. "Cor, it'd be great," drools Vince,"I've put me name down to playtest those ones personally."

A playtester recoils in horror as he plays *Rottweiler Attack*. He later complained of real bitemarks and bruises.

nicate via a radio link - no clumsy trailing cables to get under your feet here! Vince admits that the computer centre is the system's only major bug - it's just too large. Eventually customised chips will drastically reduce the size - and cost! - of the system. Unfortunately it wasn't possible to get a look at the computer due to the possibility of upsetting the delicate magnetic and electric flux fields pervading the computer room, although Vince did show me a picture of it.

LIVING ROOM OF THE FUTURE?

At the moment the only fully-working simulated environment is one Vince calls simply *Living Room*. Vince invited me to try it out and I eagerly accepted. I donned the headset and then Vince placed a dark bag over my head while he calibrated some of the AR settings. Vince apologised for this; apparently the system is very sensitive to ultraviolet while being adjusted and very bright lights could easily damage the delicate (and expensive!) sensory equipment.

With the bag still over my head Vince lead me to the 'game room'. The radio transmitter currently used is a little weak and player mobility has to be restricted to an area near the computer's transmitter. This will be improved in the final system so that the wearer could walk just about anywhere. Eventually Vince shouted from next door that I could take the bag off. I was in the *Living Room*...

Words really can't convey the amazing feeling of interacting with this highly realistic yet artificial environment. I could pick up objects and put them elsewhere, look inside them, touch, smell and taste them - the crunchy apples in the fruit bowl were delicious! I knocked into a chair and felt pain shoot through my shin! I turned on a lamp and instantly the light-source shading on the other objects in the room changed accordingly!

After a few minutes I became so overwhelmed by the experience that I began to feel a little giddy and so replaced the bag on my head, thus ending the session. I heard Vince enter the 'game room', and he helped me to a chair in his office. I was shaking, such was the system's effect on me! Any who doubt the power of VR, and the A.R.S.E. in particular, should give it a try!

THE MAN BEHIND THE MYTH

Vince Tyrell has had a fascinatingly varied life. He was born in 1961 in Deptford, south-east London. His father was a car salesman and it was in the repair shop round the back of the showroom that Vince first developed a love of technology and gadgets. As Vince recalls, "Dad was very keen for me to learn 'the business', as he called it. Some of my earliest memories are of peering inside a car bonnet, tinkering with the engine and fiddling with the mileometer."

Vince was never very happy with formal schooling and left as soon as possible at 15. "Them teachers never taught me nothing of use,' says Vince, his voice tinged with a hint of bitterness. For a while he worked for his father, but knew that his future lay elsewhere. Unfortunately his father felt otherwise. "Dad wanted me to learn and carry on the family trade, whereas I felt that we should sell up and put our money into other, more profitable markets. But Dad lacked my vision, you see? Sadly he died in a tragic accident while cleaning my shotgun and - Mum having run-off with his ex-partner several years earlier - left me everything."

Although deeply saddened at his father's death, Vince sold the garage a couple of days after the funeral and found himself, aged 22. with lots of money and the opportunity to direct his own future. It was around this time that he first began to get interested in the world of computers. He recalls, "Yeah, I though they were amazing. I used to buy old disused models, open them up and have a look inside. It's amazing how much gold you can scrape from those old circuit boards."

In 1984 Vince started his own company, Apollo Communications, selling portable phones imported from Taiwan. He later turned to selling other goods imported from the Far East, such as calculators, electronic diaries and Philippino wives. However, it was in 1987 that Vince first heard about Virtual Reality and became fascinated by its potential. "I realised that other researchers were thinking about VR the wrong way. They try to fool the punter's senses. My A.R.S.E. takes that concept a stage further and concentrates on just fooling the punter."

Vince started work on the revolutionary system in May 1990 and now feels his A.R.S.E. is ready for inspection. "I'm very happy with it so far," he enthuses, "However, there's still a fair bit of work to be done and my limited funds are running low. I'm keen to hear from anyone willing to invest in me and my company. About £250,000 - in cash, preferably - should do the trick, but more would be nice."

MEGATRAVELLER 1

THE ZHODANI CONSPIRACY

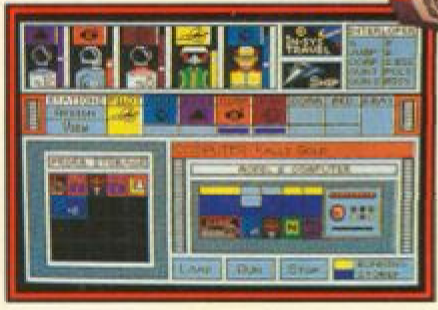
"Heralded The American Computer Role-Playing Game of the Year!"

AVAILABLE ON:
ATARI ST•COMMODORE AMIGA
IBM PC & COMPATIBLES

TAKES SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING LIGHT YEARS FORWARD!

The four legendary Frontier Wars have passed,each started by the Zhodani and each ending in a shaky peace....

MEGATRAVELLER 1
THE ZHODANI CONSPIRACY
STRATEGY



.....Now with the help of corrupt Imperium officials the Zhodani and the Outward Coalition are planning a fifth. Smuggling arms to traitorous groups within Imperium borders the Zhodani are planning to strike from within.

BASED ON MEGATRAVELLER BY GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP, THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR SCIENCE FICTION GAMING SYSTEM

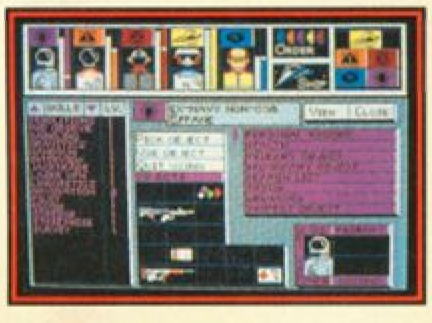
VERSATILITY

The most sophisticated character generation system ever devised: five military classes, more than 70 talents and abilities. Allows player to control character development through 5 services: Army, Navy, Marines, Merchants and Scouts.

INTERLOPER
MEGATRAVELLER

IMAGINATION

Flexible gaming system supports any playing strategy and allows multiple solutions to problems and obstacles.



FIREPOWER

Realistic, combat sequences let you control each of your characters individually, while still giving general combat orders to the other members of your party. Utilise more than 30 weapons and skills in this advanced combat system.

72 varied skills to learn and use including medical, piloting, communications, laser weapons, bribery, demolitions and handgun.

COURAGE

28 planets and satellites to explore in 8 systems filled with exciting puzzles, dangerous subplots and interesting characters to encounter.

"MegaTraveller 1, a game that truly warrants the highest level of praise, the attention to detail makes it exceptional!"

RESOURCEFULNESS

Saving the universe costs money: a detailed bartering system lets players earn Imperial credits through interplanetary trading, with 30 types of cargo.

SCREEN SHOTS TAKEN FROM IBM PC VERSION

Supports Ad Lib Music Card and Real Sound for state-of-the-art musical score, digitized speech and realistic sound effects.

EMPIRE

STRATEGY

"MegaTraveller 1 is one of the finest role-playing computer games in at least the last three or four years."

"MegaTraveller 1 is one of the best science fiction role-playing games ever for the computer."

QUOTES TAKEN FROM DRAGON MAGAZINE U.S. & QUEST BUSTERS MAGAZINE U.S.

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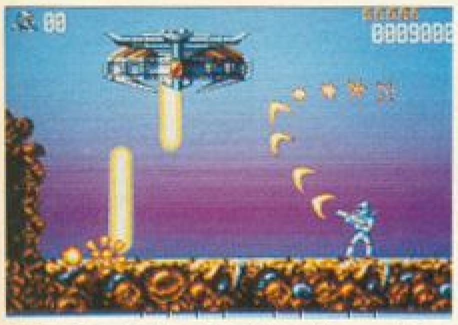
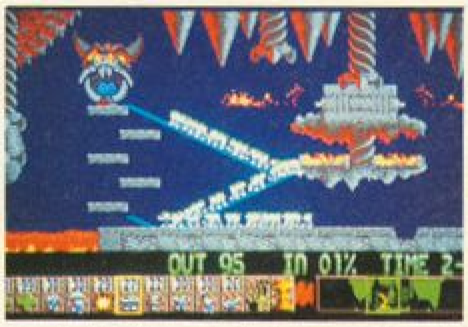
EMPIRE SOFTWARE, 4 THE STANNETTS,
LAINDON NORTH TRADE CENTRE, BASILDON, ESSEX SS15 6DJ.
TEL: 0268 541212

SCREEN TEST



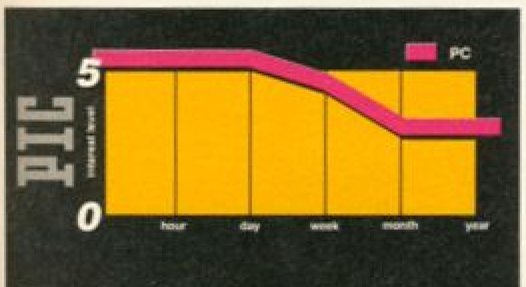
Turrican 2 from Rainbow Arts. Just another sequel to just another shoot-em-up? Prepare to be surprised on page 60



Lemmings from Psygnosis. They've got green hair and they can dig holes. Is this game *really* the worldbeater everyone thinks?

ACE TRAILBLAZER!

This month sees the first use of our new award, *The ACE Trailblazer.* **Games awarded this coveted recognition of quality must demonstrate either marked innovation or the peak of excellence in their particular field. For example, a shoot-em-up can still win a Trailblazer, but it will have to be an exceptional shoot-em-up.** *Trailblazer* **games will all be essential purchases.**



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve* – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

- **Lots of cutesy characters**
- **Fascinating 3D sections.**
- **The two player link-up option for stage 16**

- **Twelve disks to swap!**
- **No colour on some stages**
- **No joystick or mouse control option**

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.

Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.

Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

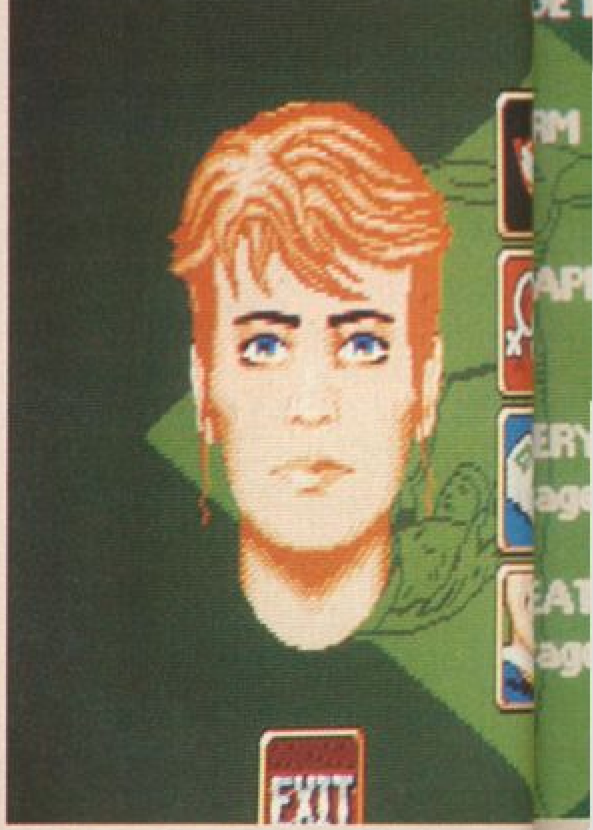
THE LINE UP

Computer and Console *pages 46-70*

46 **FLAMES OF FREEDOM** *Microprose*
48 **CHUCK ROCK** *Core Design*
49 **NAVY SEAL** *Ocean Software*
50 **SECRET WEAPONS** *US Gold*
52 **COLDITZ** *Digital Magic Software*
54 **GODS** *Renegade*
55 **MAGIC POCKETS** *Renegade*
56 **LEMMINGS** *Psygnosis*
58 **UTOPIA** *Gremlin*
60 **M.U.D.S.** *Rainbow Arts*
61 **TURRICAN 2** *Rainbow Arts*
63 **EXILE** *Audiogenic*
64 **ZANY GOLF** *Electronic Arts*
65 **GYNOUG** *Megadrive*
67 **STAR CONTROL** *Accolade*
68 **WARLOCK** *Milennium*
69 **SUPER MONACO GP** *US Gold*
70 **LIFE AND DEATH 2** *Mindscape*

MIDWINTER II

flames of freedom



Bigger and better than its astonishing predecessor, *Midwinter II* is an amazing game.

It's 65 years since the big freeze. The global climate is beginning to warm and Midwinter Island is thawing out and breaking down into a set of new islands. Off the coast of Africa, a strategically important set of atolls and islands are rapidly falling under the control of the tyrannical Saharan Empire. Agora, stronghold of the Atlantic Federation is in an increasingly precarious situation. It is clear that once sufficient control over the bulk of islands in the group has been attained, Saharan forces will be strong enough to overwhelm the Federation forces on Agora.

It's your task, as a sole Federation agent to prevent Saharan growth, liberate islands, delay the Saharan armada and redress the balance of power.

Before the mission can begin, you must construct your agent. Name, colour, sex, height, weight and appearance can all be altered. The psychological and physical build of your agent will determine how you have to play the game. Equally, your actions during the game will alter the character. *Flames of Freedom* includes possibly the most worthwhile and tangible character development seen in a game so far.

Rather than embarking on a long campaign which may have no real effect on the march of the enemy, you can simulate the results of successful missions on certain islands and view how the Saharan fleet will behave as a result. The islands are connected via supply lines, and you'll soon learn how to create chain reactions; taking one island will cause another to fall, cutting off supply lines to another and so on.

By forcing the Saharan forces through Federation strongholds, you can force a higher rate of attrition on their part, thus making the final conflict on Agora more balanced.

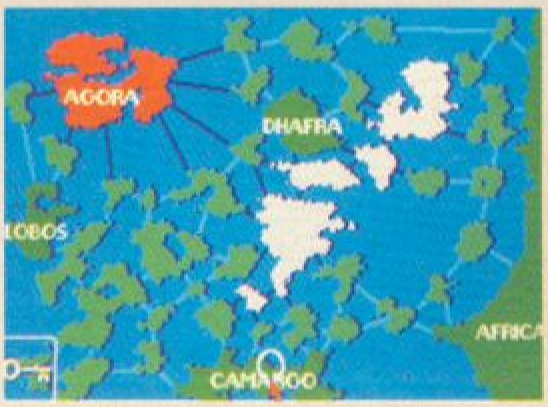
Once you have chosen a particular set of islands to take, and which one you with which you wish to start, your controller will then brief you as to your missions. Once each set of missions has been completed, the island will fall under Federation control. Depending on the nature and strategic importance of the island, your list of missions will be appropriately tough.

Throughout the course of his mission, you must interact with characters on various islands. Some are neutral, others are strongly allied to either the Saharan of Atlantic cause. Others are double agents and some are just plain mysterious. A great many violent interactions with other people will enhance your ability to threaten and menace but the chances are you'll completely forget how to charm people.

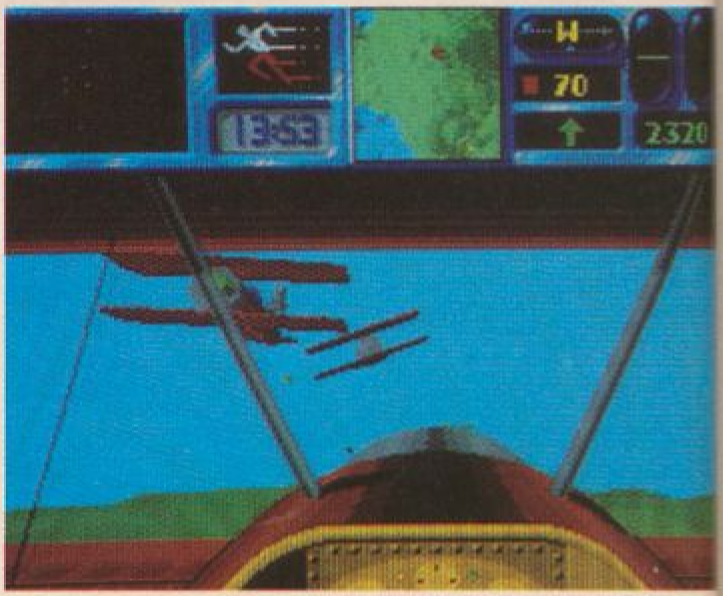
Now, on top of all this strategy are the 3D graphics. Whenever you're in a vehicle, the world is depicted in polygon graphics. Superior to anything you've seen before, these represent the landscape in a truly amazing way. Waves break on the shore, the tide comes in, bombs leave craters and the world even looks different depending on what time of day it is. Infra-red cameras are available for night activity. This level of detail, of course, depletes the frame-rate a little but everything still comes together for an immensely impressive overall effect.

TRAVEL AND TIME

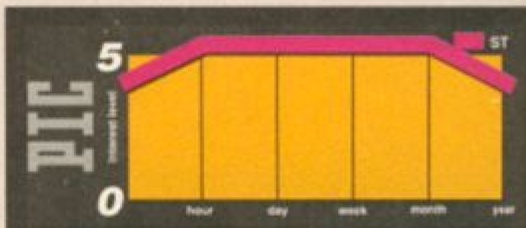
The *Flames of Freedom* gameworld is enormous. Probably around eight times the size of *Midwinter*. As a result, your chosen mode of



One of the fractal views of the game area. By testing your strategy on this screen you can avoid expending lots of time on ineffective island-toppling.



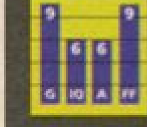
One of the most entertaining modes of transport is the biplane. In all there are 22 different ways of moving around in the game. Each better suited to particular missions.



***Flames of Freedom* is an exceptional game. Most of its elements (apart from the fractal-graphics) have been seen in some form or other before. However, it's the way in which all these elements; strategy, action, character interaction and grand-scale wargaming have been combined which make it such an excellent game. For the novice player, it represents quite a steep challenge, but the icon-driver is as friendly as possible. The depth of play alone makes *Flames of Freedom* a classic.**

ACE RATING

950



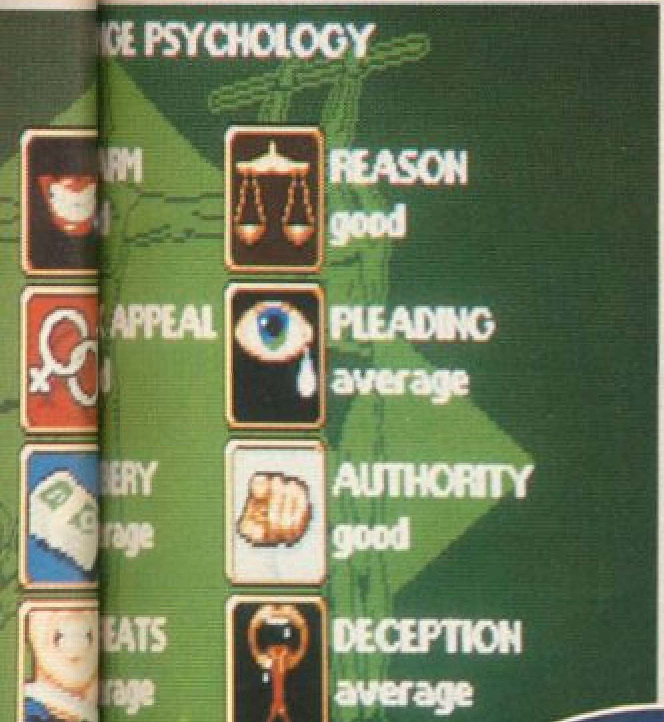
ATARI ST

While *Flames of Freedom* comes on three disks, the amount of swapping involved during play is absolutely minimal; probably about one change an hour. The compression rates must be phenomenal. The only criticism is that inevitably, such ambitious graphics aren't particularly fast.

RELEASE DETAILS

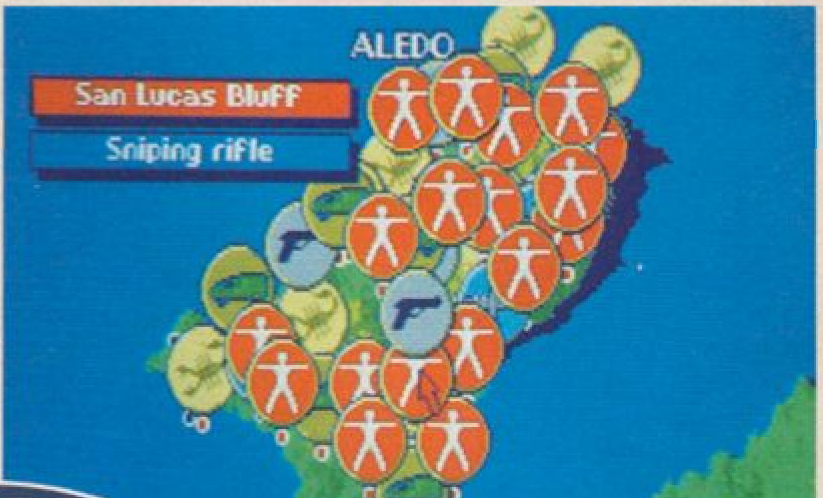
AMIGA	£24.99	LATE MARCH
ATARI ST	£24.99	LATE MARCH

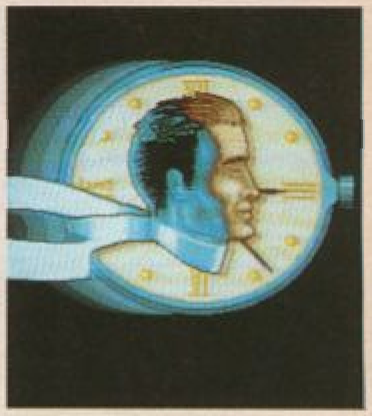
No other versions planned

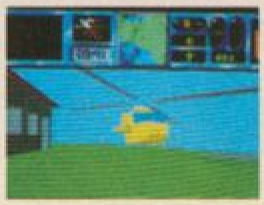


Detailed breakdowns of your physical and psychological make-up are available for inspection at any time. As well as being able to define the initial levels, you can watch your character grow throughout the game. Each factor has an effect on the outcome of different encounters. (left) Maps of the island offer invaluable information on the locations of weapons, people and vehicles. (below)

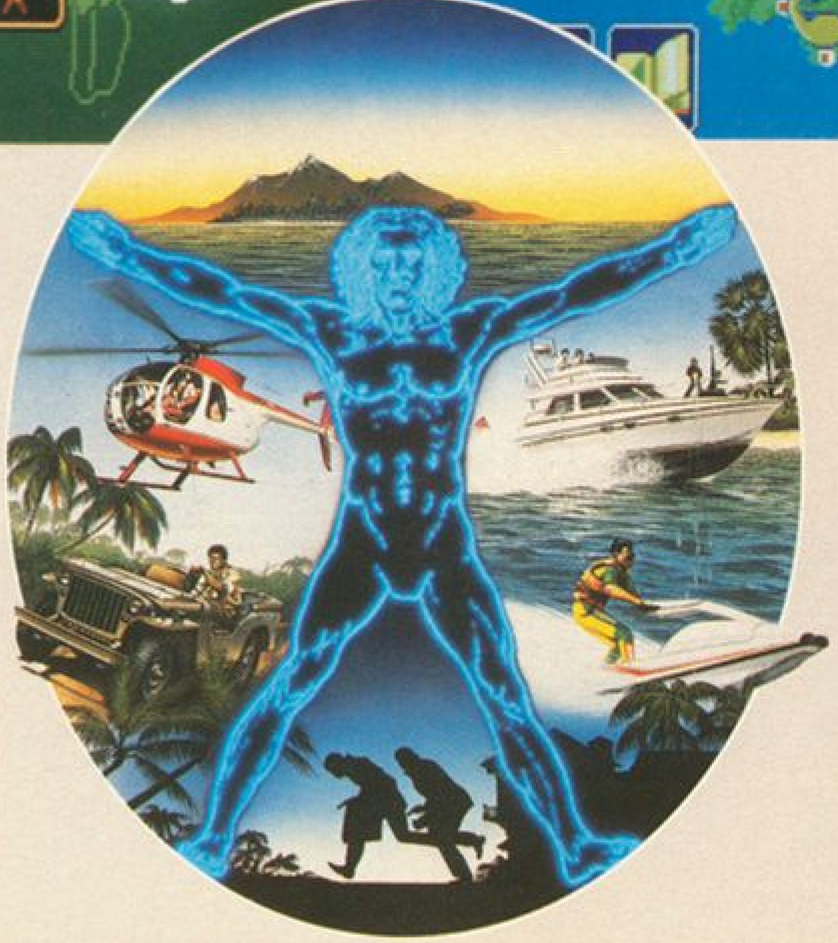
Throughout the game the chances are that your encounters with the secret police will end you in the clink. Your sex appeal and charm are often more useful than your muscle. (left)

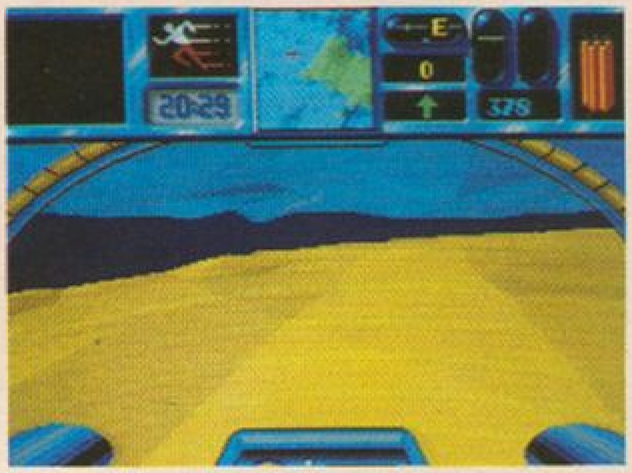






Travel can take a long time. Prudent use of the Speed-Up Icon (top) will help you on your way.
Handy parking on the lawn of a building (above)
Impressive fractals for the sea-bed and the waves themselves (below)





transport is vital. Quite apart from simply travelling around the islands, there's a lot of ocean to cover too. There are around 22 different modes of transport, each with its own characteristics. Moving around the world no matter what transport you have is easy. By clicking on your destination using one of the variable-zoom fractal representations of the map, you can speed up time and reach your target almost immediately. Game time, of course progresses as normal.

MISSIONS AND PEOPLE

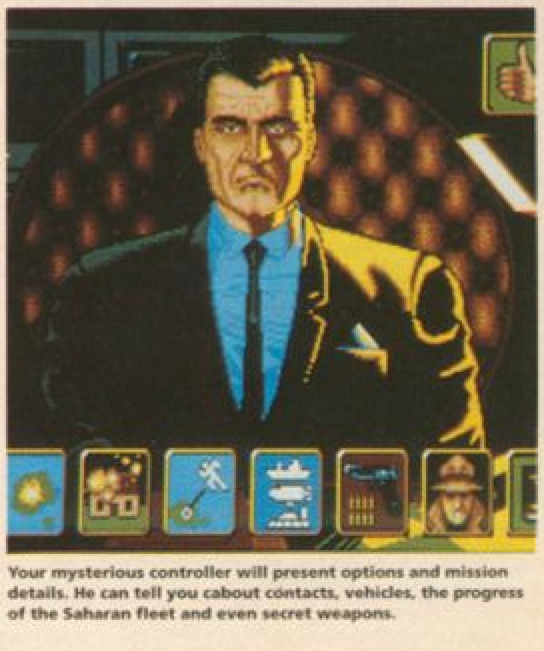
The missions incorporated in the game offer far more depth than those in most war-strat games. You must assassinate enemy agents, blow up command centres, attack supply routes and build up confidences and alliances with the people you encounter on the islands. Successful completion of a set of missions will result in congratulations from your commanding officer, some effect in slowing the Saharan assault and possible a bonus reward from the people of the island.

Once you've found a person (you'll know of at least one person on most islands), you can talk to them and try to get some useful information out of them. Some will offer help immediately, either by giving you transport,

THE MAPS

Maps offer all sorts of information depending on the zoom-rate. Icons denoting contacts, weapons and transport all pop up. By clicking on them, you can find out more about each one. It's from the map screen that all the long-distance travelling goes on. These overviews of the game are invaluable.

● Jim Douglas



Your mysterious controller will present options and mission details. He can tell you cabout contacts, vehicles, the progress of the Saharan fleet and even secret weapons.

NAVY S.E.A.L.S

OCEAN's latest film tie-in takes you on a topical Gulf rescue mission

Navy S.E.A.L.S. is an eight-level sneak-up-on-'em based on the forthcoming movie of the same name starring Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn. The basic plot goes like this: your team of five S.E.A.L.S., crack SAS-style fighters, are on a mission to rescue two pilots who have crashed behind a hostile Gulf state's lines and are being held captive. While searching, you discover secret stockpiles of stolen ground-to-air missiles, which must be destroyed.

But what do I mean by "sneak-up-on-'em"? Well, when you play you'll find that just running around like a gung-ho maniac trying to shoot everything that moves will result in a quick death - the enemy are fast and one shot from their rapid-fire guns is all it takes to kill you.

Instead, you have to use stealth - the enemy can only 'see' in the direction they're facing, so you must creep up and attack from behind. Alternatively you can jump down on them or climb up from below - you can kill enemy soldiers by touching them (because you're so rock-hard at hand-to-hand combat). Unlike many other games a dead soldier stays dead - there are no magical resurrections here. If you backtrack you'll still find an enemy's corpse lying where you killed him.

Each level is a scrolling network of platforms, crates and walls. Your S.E.A.L. has an impressive range of well-animated moves at his disposal: he can run left and right, jump, crouch, climb ladders, shin up pipes or poles and monkey-swing when hanging from beams.

Each S.E.A.L. begins armed with a single-shot pistol but more powerful weapons, such as machine guns, flame throwers and missile launchers, can be found by blowing open red crates. You can cycle through your weapons to find the one best suited to your current situation, but use them carefully - ammo is limited.

Navy S.E.A.L.S. is an interesting variation on the platforms 'n' guns theme, though some may find the pace a little slow and the action a little too frustrating - it's very easy to get killed and five lives aren't that many. You can shoot the enemy when they're just off-screen (although

ACE PREPLAY

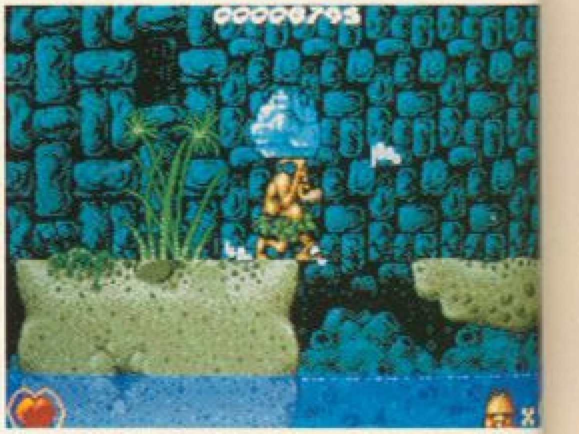
- Unusual approach to action film tie-in.
- Colourful graphics and well-animated sprites, with the S.E.A.L.S. having a large number of fancy moves.
- The impressive sound samples are clear and loud.

- The game is very tough and a little slow-paced, with progress depending a great deal on knowing where the enemy are in advance.
- Scrolling is jerky.
- Game scenario is a little sensitive.

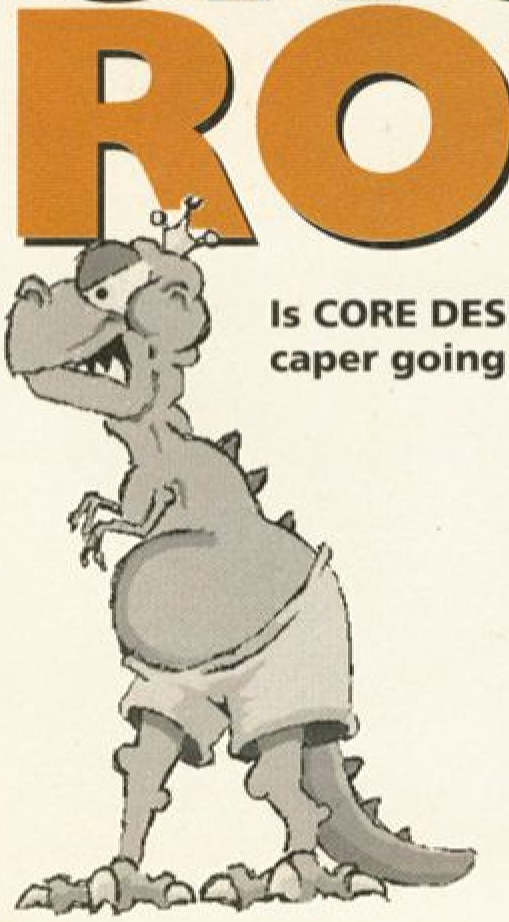
Release Details

AMIGA	£24.95	TBA
ATARI ST	£24.95	TBA
AMSTRAD	TBA	TBA
C64	TBA	TBA
SPECTRUM	TBA	TBA

CHUCK ROCK



Chuck's just about to make a splash on the underwater level. Chuck can pick up rocks of varying size but moves more slowly depending on their weight. Rocks can then be thrown at the bad guys or used as stepping stones to platforms unreachable by jumping.



Is CORE DESIGN's forthcoming caveman caper going to make history?

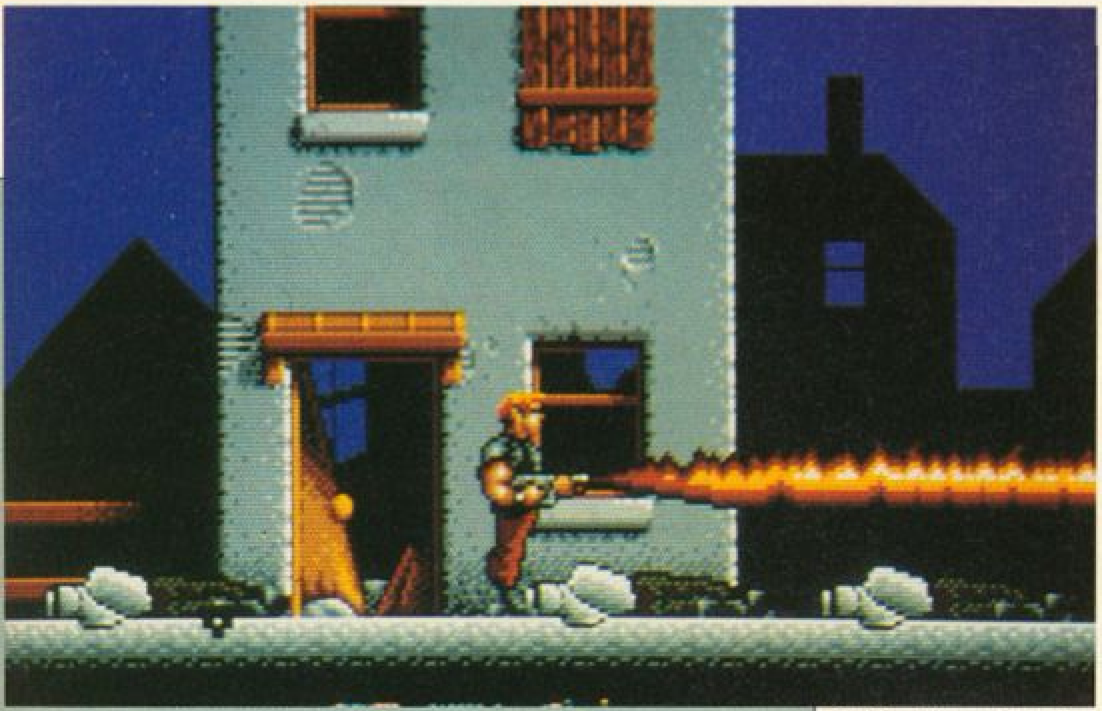
Chuck Rock is a nifty Neanderthal with a wife problem - she's been kidnapped by his arch-rival Gary Gritter and is locked away at the end of more than 25 levels of rock ledges and sheer cliffs. As Chuck leaps and bounds his way towards his sweetheart's prison he'll have to defeat all manner of weird and wacky monsters.

Chuck's quest will take him through five 'zones', including an icescape and the guts of a dead Brontosaurus. At the end of each zone there's a mean and massive guardian dino to get past - Tim the Tyrannosaurus and Wayne the Woolly Mammoth are just a couple of them. Each has its own attack method and special weak point - it's up to you to find out what that is.

By pushing up and pressing fire you can make Chuck perform a flying kick to knock out the dinos, but more fun - if less aesthetic - is the 'belly butt': tap fire and Chuck whacks the cute creatures out of the way with his beer gut.

Not all the monsters are out to stop you. Some will carry you across pits or swamps, others can be used as stepping stones to platforms too high to jump to and others will act as drones, following you around and attacking the bad guys.

The game design is by Robert Churchill, Chris Long is the man responsible for programming, Lee Pullen drew the graphics and Matthew Simmons is writing the music and sound effects. All have done an excellent job so far. The beauti-

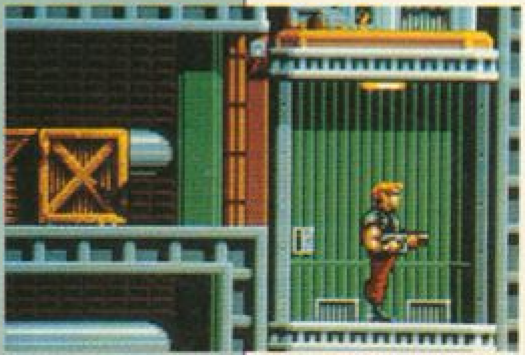


The flame thrower is one of the most useful weapons because it can fire through crates and other barriers.

they can't shoot you) and success does seem to rely a little too much on this, i.e. shooting at where you know the enemy will be.

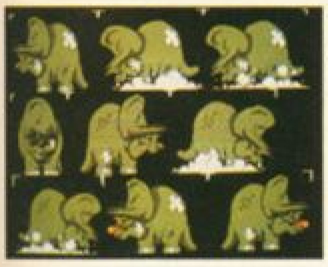
In this previewed ST-version's favour are the graphics, which features good animation on the sprites (some of which are huge) and colourful backgrounds (although the screen scrolls at a slightly-jerky 8 pixels, 17 times per second), and the crisp and loud samples for explosions and guns.

The game is near-as-damn-it finished, with release pending on when the film comes out in this country (which in turn is likely to depend on the current international situation, considering the accidentally-topical plot). Watch out for the in-depth ACE review soon.

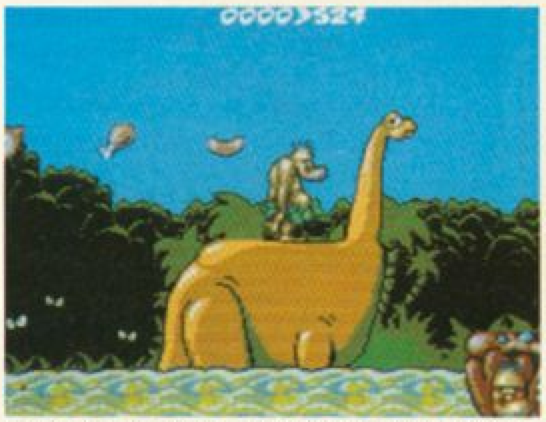


The lifts are the quickest way of getting from A to B. The levels are designed to channel you towards the end of the level, so there's no real need to make any maps.

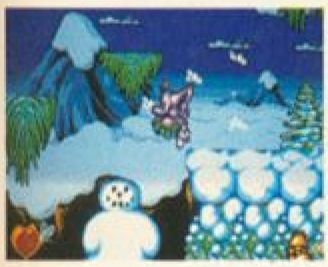
● **David Upchurch**



◄ The animation frames for Frank the Triceratops, one of the end-of-zone baddies.



This friendly Brontosaurus is more than willing to give you a lift across the swamp - just jump on his back and give 'im a whack! During the journey you can snack on the meaty bonuses floating in mid-air.



◄ Chillin'! The ice age is coming and poor old Chuck only has his loincloth to protect his parts from the cold. Neat graphical touches abound - for example, you can see Chuck's breath on this level.

ful parallax scrolling is a joy to behold, control of Chuck is smooth and instinctive and the area to explore is huge - each zone is 16 screens wide and 3 screens high.

Only one level of the Amiga version (we haven't seen the ST version yet) was fully playable at the time of viewing, but if the rest are as much fun then Core should have a big success on their hands. *Chuck Rock* is due for release in mid-April, so look out for the full ACE review nearer then.

By the way, what do you call a dinosaur with one eye? A Do-you-think-he-saurus!

● **David (Yabba-dabba-doo) Upchurch**

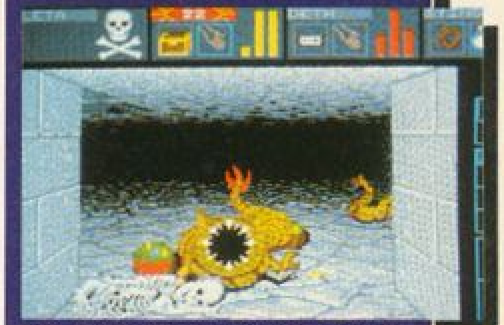
ACE PREPLAY

👍	👎
● Very colourful, with superb full-screen parallax multidirectional scrolling and huge sprites. ● Chuck's foes are drawn with the accent on humour, making the game great fun to watch. ● The ability to pick up rocks and build platforms adds extra challenge to the basic formula.	● Chuck is not the most lovable or cute of sprites to guide around.

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Mid-April
ATARI ST	£24.99	Mid-April

UP DATES



In the Lair of the Yellow Wyrms. Your party is in trouble right from the start - there's no light and the room is packed with these vicious so-and-so's. A couple of light spells should sort out the first problem but what are you going to do about the second?

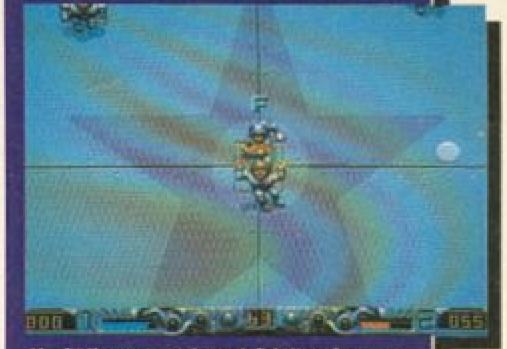
CHAOS STRIKES BACK

FTL/Mirrorsoft £24.95; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 29; ACE RATING 945

Dungeon *Master*, to which this is a sequel, broke the mould of computer RPGs. You had to guide a party of four brave souls around a series of labyrinths and chambers, fighting vicious monsters and solving mind-bending puzzles. What made the game so special was its combination of first-person perspective view and sparse yet effective sound which generated a real atmosphere. The sequel is basically more of the same, but much harder both from the fighting and puzzle points of view.

The ST version appeared just over a year ago, so you'd be quite justified in expecting a substantially overhauled product, especially since you need a full 1 Meg of RAM to play. Unfortunately your expectations will be confounded - the game is no different apart from the memory requirement. *CSB* is still an excellent game, but one can't help feeling that it's looking a little old now, especially since the release of games like *Xenomorph* and more importantly *Captive*.

AMIGA RATING: 896



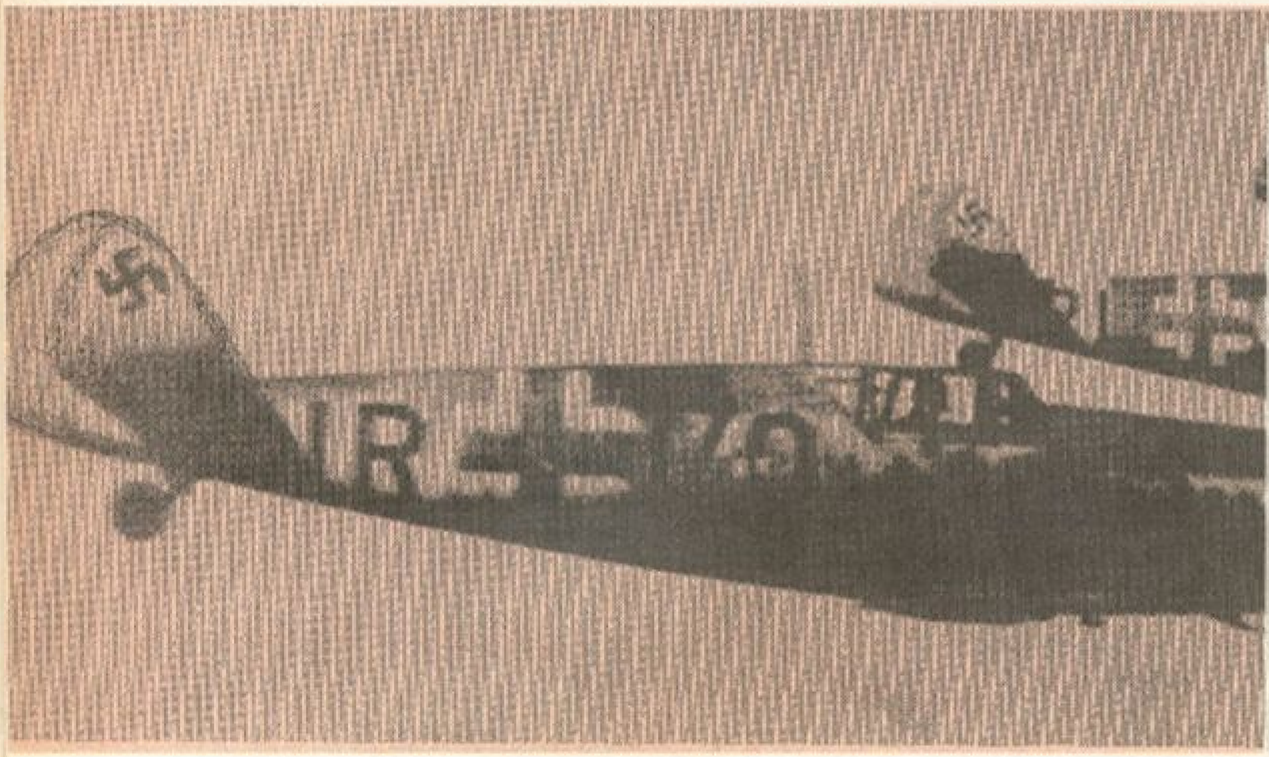
"Ooof!" The two centre forwards fight it out for possession of the ball as the crowd roars with blood lust. Note the improved pitch markings on this Amiga version.

SPEEDBALL 2

Imageworks £24.99; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 40; ACE RATING 889

Phew! The ST version was great, but the Amiga version is little short of amazing. The pitch seems to scroll more quickly and smoothly, and play seems faster (although the Bitmaps swear that both versions are identical speedwise). The Amiga's graphic superiority is utilised to produce better pitch detail and the support screens are drawn in 32 colours. But the most impressive improvement is the sound: the crowd roars, players grunt and groan as they get beaten up and the commentator shouts out "Replay" and "Get ready!" - there's even a vendor in the crowd yelling "Ice cream! Ice cream!". It's one of the best examples of how great sound can really add to a game, and easily makes this the future sports sim to buy.

AMIGA RATING: 903 TRAILBLAZER!!



SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE

LUCASFILM GAMES and US GOLD have a new historic air combat simulator on the runway. Rik Haynes takes a preflight preview...

Nearly fifty years ago, German military engineers were developing ground-breaking stealth bombers, air-to-air rockets and supersonic jets for their Nazi masters. The fruits of their pioneering efforts are now being employed by American pilots over the skies of Iraq. Lucasfilm Games, the respected creator of *Battlehawks* and *Their Finest Hour*, will soon let you test the best from the Third Reich in an exciting and comprehensive flight simulation.

"As American forces seized control of the skies over Germany, Nazi scientists unleashed strange and powerful aerial weapons in a last, desperate attempt to win the war," explains Lucasfilm Games.

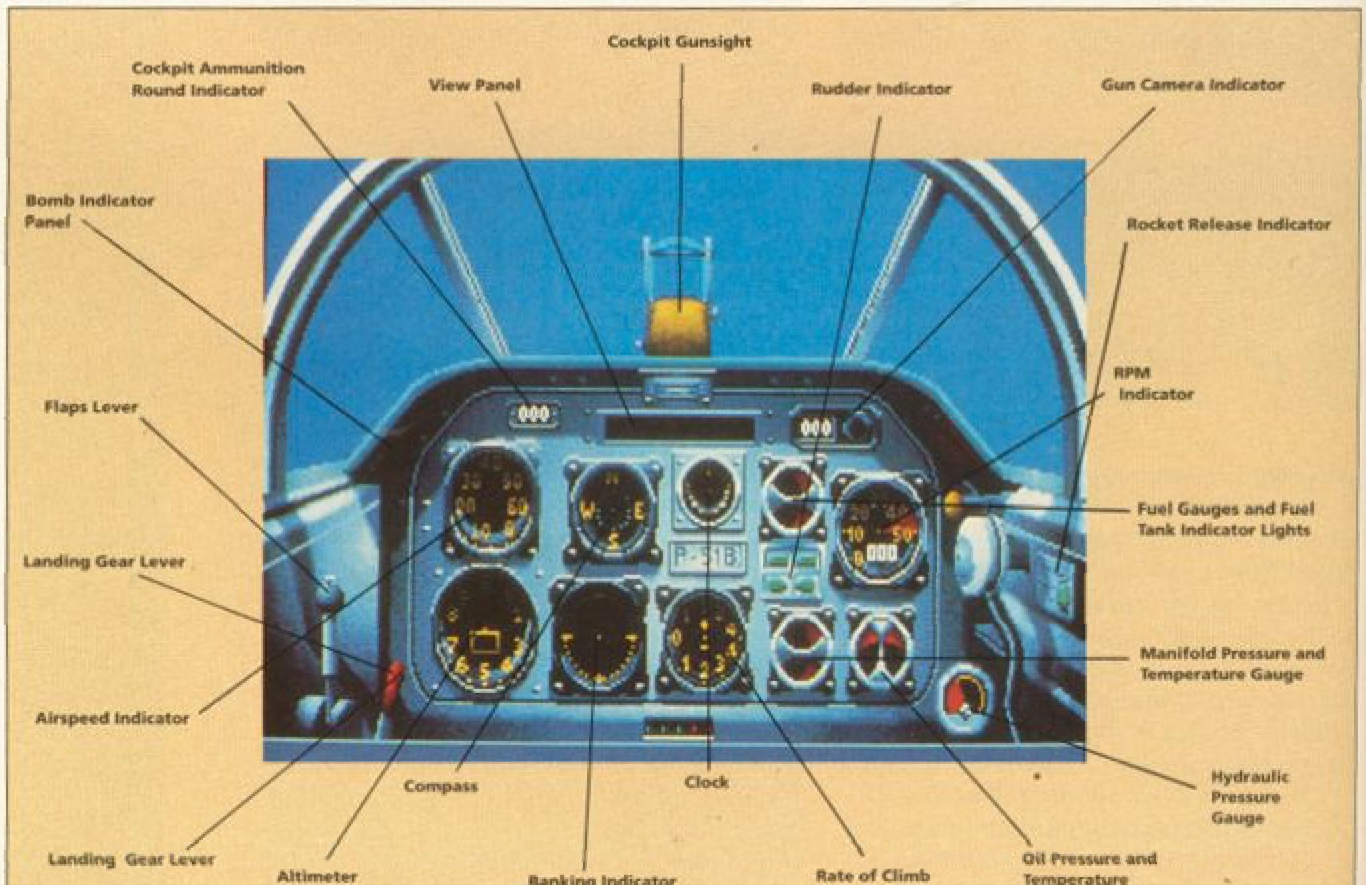
The variety, sophistication and sheer brilliance of this hi-tech weaponry was amazing. Among the many gadgets were rockets which could be fired underwater by U-boat submarines, radio-guided air-to-ground glide bombs and two-stage anti-aircraft missiles. By the end of the war, Nazi scientists were even developing 'flying saucers'. Ultimately these inventions were not enough to save the master race and pure desperation started to show in the bunkers beneath Berlin. Perhaps the most startling example of this collapse was the He162 Volksjager, a single jet engine mounted on a slender fuselage with plywood wings. German high command wanted to pilot these deathtraps with boys from the Hitler Youth. Fortunately these teenagers were saved by the fact that the thing was too difficult to fly.

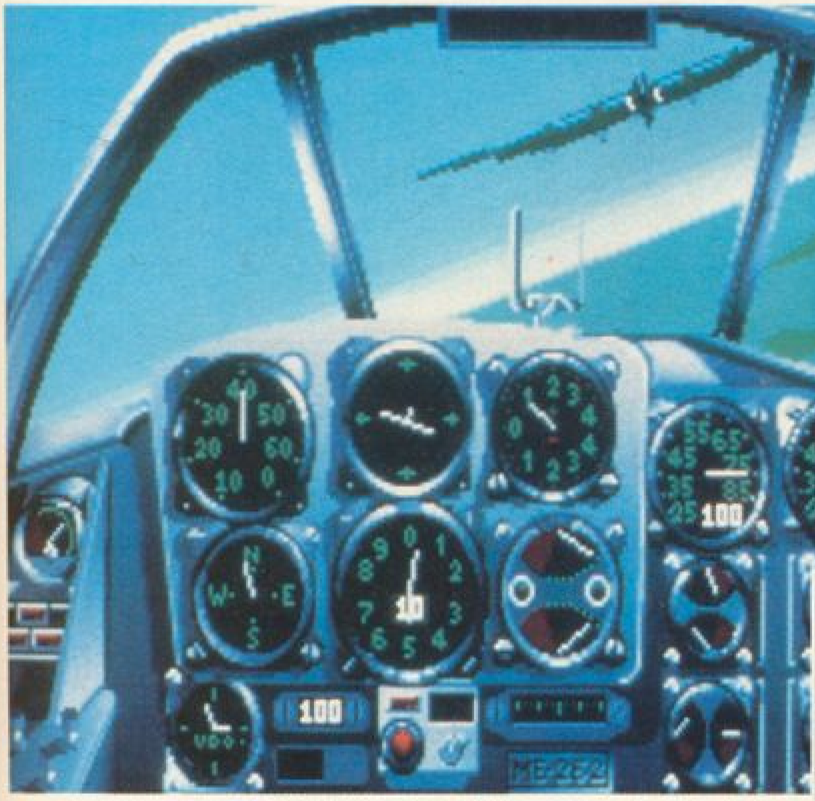
In their race to Berlin at the end of World War Two, Soviet and American governments picked up as many German engineers as they could find. These superweapon scientists were the only asset Germany had left by the spring of 1945. They held the key to the future of flight and, eventually, the exploration of outer space. For instance, Werner von Braun designed both

"The fighter is simply a flying gun."
RAF Group-Captain Johnnie Johnson

"The Americans are good at making fancy cars and refrigerators, but that doesn't mean that they are any good at making aircraft."
Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring

"Hitler built a fortress around Europe, but he forgot to put a roof on it."
President Franklin D Roosevelt


Cockpit Gunsight
Cockpit Ammunition Round Indicator
View Panel
Rudder Indicator
Gun Camera Indicator
Bomb Indicator Panel
Rocket Release Indicator
RPM Indicator
Flaps Lever
Fuel Gauges and Fuel Tank Indicator Lights
Landing Gear Lever
Manifold Pressure and Temperature Gauge
Airspeed Indicator
Hydraulic Pressure Gauge
Compass
Clock
Landing Gear Lever
Altimeter
Banking Indicator
Rate of Climb Indicator
Oil Pressure and Temperature Gauge
P-51B



Luftwaffe General Adolf Galland said, after test-flying the Messerschmitt Me262 in May 1943, "this is not a step foward, this is a leap!" The Me262 was the first jet aircraft to be used in combat against other aircraft. In March 1945, Hitler let the Luftwaffe form an elite fighter unit of aces flying Me262s. Jagdverband 44 fitted their jet fighters with R4M air-to-air rocket launchers. Six Me262s equipped with these effective but unguided missiles could shoot down fifteen American B-17 bombers without losing a single jet. On March 18th, twenty-five American B-17s and five P-51 escort fighters were destroyed by Me262s over Berlin. A month later, Jagdverband 44 was gutted by its Nazi masters as the Allied tanks reached the airfield.

👍	👎
Super-realistic bit-mapped flight routines. Enormous variety of aircraft to fly. Bumper packaging including depthy manuals adding to the feel of the era and great value for money.	Probably a bit much to deal with until you've got to grips with the controls. Possibly not the best game for all-out action fans.

That was then - and this is now. This Tornado is part of the modern Germany's Luftwaffe.

the feared V-2 missile for the Nazi's and the American Saturn Five space rocket.

In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* you can fly more practical examples of German inventiveness. The Messerschmitt 262 jet fighter, Messerschmitt 163 rocket interceptor, Gotha 229 flying wing, Messerschmitt 109 fighter and Focke-Wulf 190 fighter are all ready for take-off. The Gotha 229 is my particular favourite. This remarkable aircraft, designed by two brothers, was years ahead of its time. Made of wood, the 'flying wing' fighter-bomber was virtually undetectable by radar and had excellent flying attributes. By the time the American Army had captured the Gotha Factory in April 1945, the Germans had devised deadly variants such as a six-engine jet bomber with a range of 4000 miles, two-seat all-weather fighter and supersonic flying wings.

Every plane in the game has authentic instruments, weapons and flight characteristics. Lucasfilm Games has improved the 3D graphics engine of *Their Finest Hour* by injecting more colour and realism. The 'seat-of-your-pants' feeling of flight remains, as does the extensive collection of gameplay options. All this is backed up by another superb manual illustrated with rarely published photographs which help set the superweapons scene.

"Only the spirit of attack born in a brave heart will bring success to any fighter aircraft, no matter how highly developed it may be," said Luftwaffe General Adolf Galland. Lucasfilm Games will give you the chance to learn this historic lesson for yourself. *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* is surely the most eagerly awaited flight-sim of 1991. Stay tuned for the first review in the next issue of ACE.

BOMB THE BASE

Despite its name, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* contains more than just the techno toys offered by Hitler's hitmen. The game allows you to choose between flying as a German or an American. If you join the United States Eighth Air Force your missions will largely involve strategic daylight bombing of various ground targets in western Europe and providing fighter escort. The generous guys at Lucasfilm Games let you loose on the American P-51 Mustang fighter, P-47 Thunderbolt fighter and B-17 Flying Fortress bomber. As a U.S. Air Force newsletter proclaimed, "warm your guns for Jerry's final brainstorm".

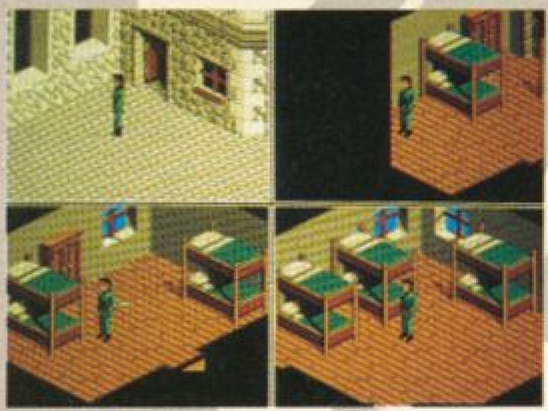
ESCAPE FROM Colditz

DIGITAL MAGIC SOFTWARE pack the Gibson board game into silicon. A narrow squeak, or a run-away success?

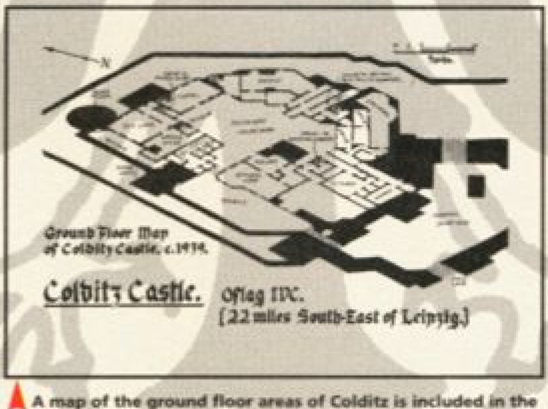
This is a bit of a curate's egg, this one. Good in parts, disappointing in others, but overall a worthy effort for which we should be truly thankful. It will appeal very strongly to those persistent gamesters who like mapping and taking notes. Those who like to shoot first and ask questions afterwards (if at all) may be frustrated by a game that demands persistence, trial, error, and a good deal of detective work.

You have independent control over four characters of different nationalities. Each character starts the game in the British, American, French, or Polish quarters as appropriate and you can swap between them at any time. Pressing a function key will also display all four characters and their surroundings simultaneously, but action is paused in this mode so you can't manoeuvre characters and watch their comrades at the same time (unless you're in the same location).

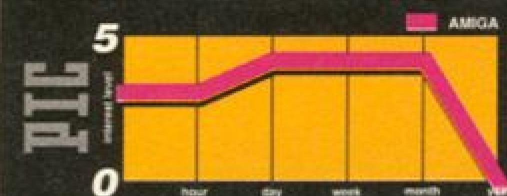
The environment is closely modelled on the real Colditz, which harboured high security prisoners during WW2 and to which persistent escapers like the notorious Douglas Bader were usually consigned. The graphic representation of the castle is very attractive and uses an isometric grid display showing one location at a time.



The PAUSE key invokes a screen showing the current location of each of your characters. This shot was taken during the recreation period: you've managed to guide the British prisoner down to the courtyard: the other three are still waiting in their quarters.



A map of the ground floor areas of Colditz is included in the package. You'll have to map the rest yourself – not a simple task!



Not an easy game to get into but, once you start to make progress, the challenge will keep you hooked for quite a while until you've cracked it. Then there's unlikely to be any incentive to return...

ACE RATING
825

G	IQ	A	FF
8	5	8	5

AMIGA

Colditz looks very attractive – particularly the courtyard scenes – and the sound (what there is of it) is pregnant with atmosphere. Control on the isometric display takes a little getting used to, particularly when you're navigating the stairs. There are no technical surprises here – the real appeal of this game is in the playing of it, not the programming.

RELEASE DETAILS

C64/128	£12.99cs	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£29.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£29.99	OUT NOW

The ST and Amiga versions come with The Colditz Story book included. The C64 package includes a voucher which, if you send it off, will get you a free copy.

The principle of the game is simple: explore the castle, co-operate with your companions, and escape. Your actions are subject to interference by guards (most of whom follow particular paths at particular times), locked doors and 'restricted areas' – i.e. all areas outside your own quarters. Things are made a little easier by the daily exercise break during which you are allowed in the courtyard and, by default, in all areas that might be used as access to it.

TAKING RISKS

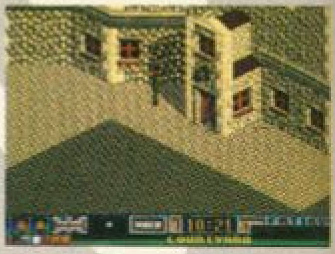
Your first task is to map as much of the castle as possible bar the ground floor, which is mapped for you in the documentation. This not only pinpoints possible tunnelling sites but also allows you to collect essential items ranging from stones (used to distract the guards' attention) to passes (used in conjunction with uniforms to penetrate certain locations).

Exploration is risky. Once you stray out of your quarters you can expect at the very least to be spotted by a guard. If he is unable to arrest you immediately, he notes your name on a list (a 'guilty' status indicated by prison bars flashing over your character icon) which will result in your arrest the next time a guard encounters you. Alternatively, you may be apprehended immediately.

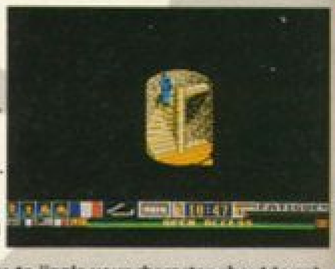
Once arrested, you are confined to solitary for a few hours – not so bad in itself as you can carry on with one of your other characters, but the real drawback here is that arrest loses you all your carefully collected possessions. The solution is to dump your lock picks, keys, and other finds immediately if you think you are in danger – you can always pick them up again at the same spot as the guards, apparently, are uninterested in such trifles.

Arrest, however, is nothing compared to the drawbacks involved in being shot. These drawbacks are of a painful and permanent kind, involving complete loss of a character and his possessions. Death, in other words, is to be avoided – but you can never be absolutely sure when a guard is going to get trigger happy.

Guard movements and behaviour can be ascertained by careful note-taking and, together with mapping, this activity takes much of the first few hours of the game. Once you've sorted out the guard activities in each quarter (not difficult) you can start moving your characters into each other's quarters – essential, since each has access to items that may be best used in other areas.



An empty courtyard: a rarity. During recreation periods, the yard gives you access to several strategically important locations – getting to them at other times is very risky but sometimes necessary. The yard also yields the odd pebble, which can then be thrown varying distances to distract guards.



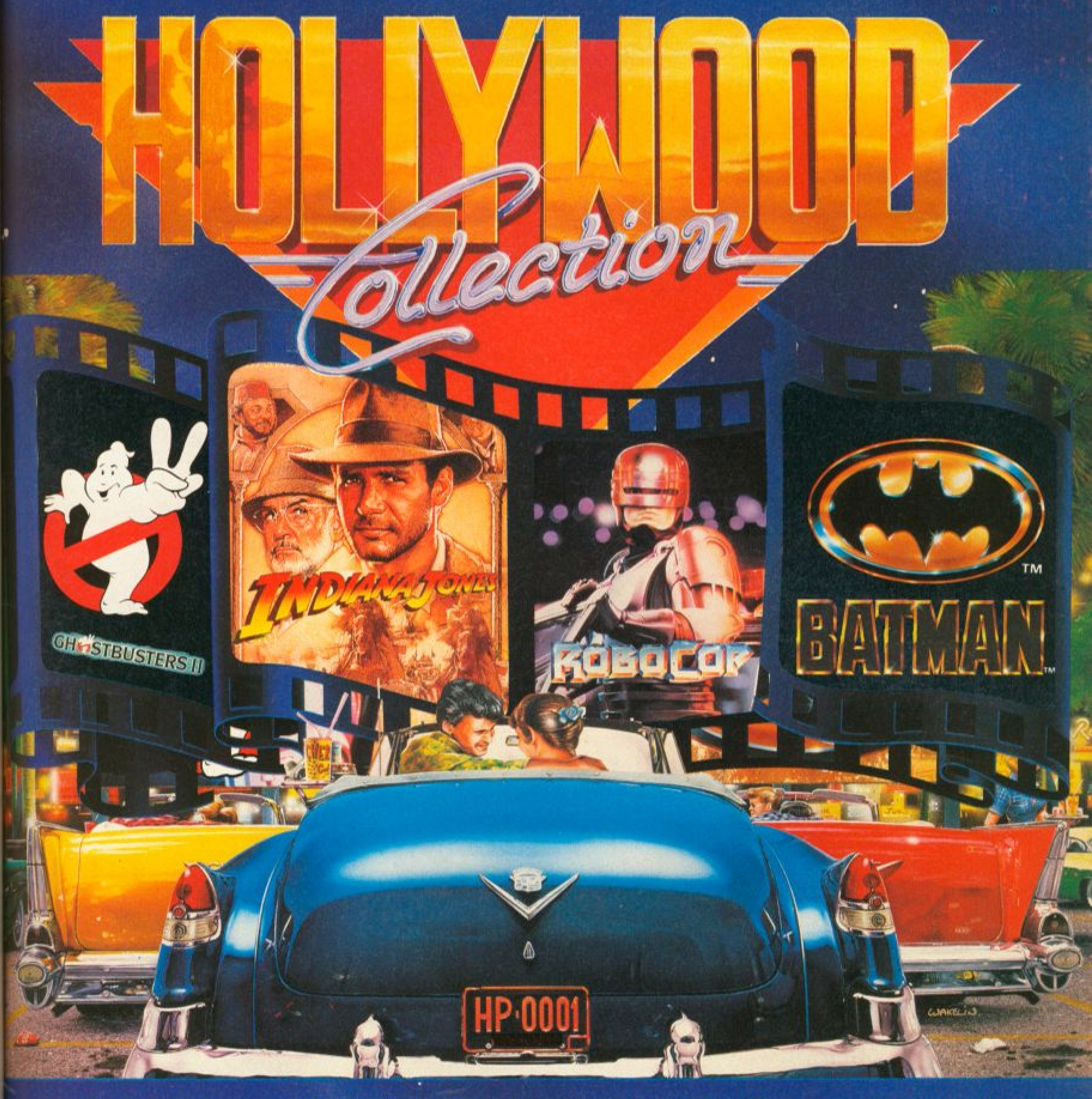
Open access areas include stairways, halls, and corridors and are out of bounds except during recreation times. Here you've got entangled with a guard on the stairs: the awkward movement controls mean that you may have to jiggle your character about to get him away from the guard, who is trying to move in the opposite direction.

In the later stages of the game, you can start using more advanced tactics including impersonation, diversion, and 'stooging'. The latter (available on the Amiga and ST only) involves making one of your characters an outpost to give you advance warning of approaching guards.

Colditz is going to keep you busy for a long time. The drawback is that much of the gameplay in the early stages is repetitive as you build up your knowledge base and this could be enough to put the more impulsive player off. The rest off us are in clover...

● Steve Cooke

THE COMPILATION PACK OF MEGA STARS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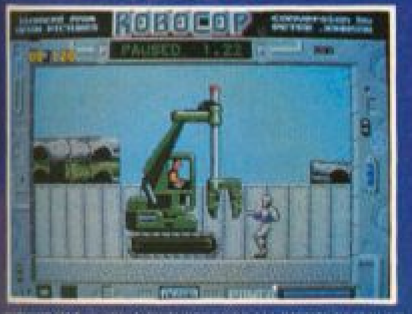
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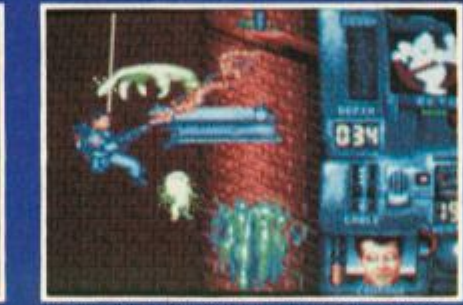

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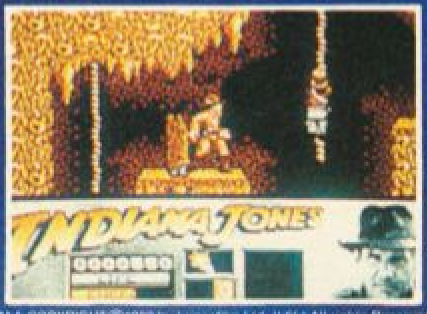
INDIANA JONES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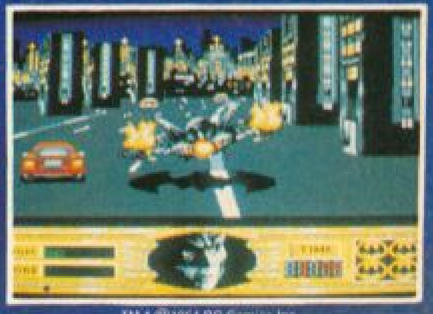
BATMAN



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AMIGA ATARI ST

ocean

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COMMODORE

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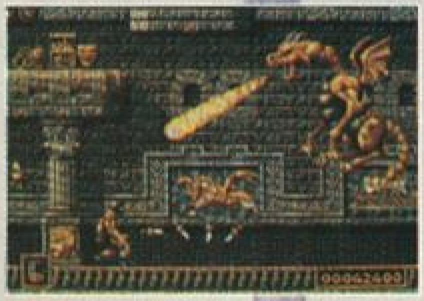
GODS

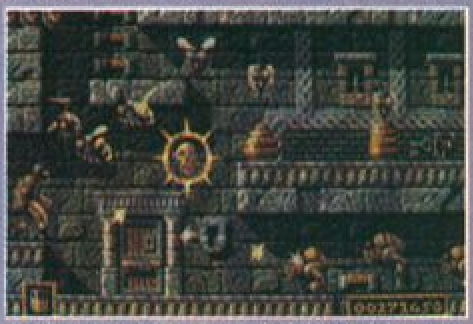
Minotaurs, harpies, satyrs, gargoyles... and a little lad with much more than fluff-covered old boiled sweets in his pockets. The BITMAP BROTHERS reveal their forthcoming RENEGADE releases to ACE

Be still, reader, and hear my tale. The journey from the sin pits of Farring-don to the wastes of Wapping was long and fraught with great peril. Thanks only to my wit, courage and all-zones travelcard did I prevail. As I sat in the reception room at the mighty castle of the Bitmap Brothers I am not ashamed to admit that I did soil my undergarments. A dark-clad figure approached. "Greetings, Eric, son of Matthews", I offered. "Hail, ACE, and well met. Hast thou come to see our new games?". "Aye," I replied. "Then let us tarry not, the Gods await..."

It's been a fair few months since the razzmatazz CES launch of Renegade. Born from the successful collaboration between the Bitmaps and Bomb the Bass for the music to Mirrorsoft's *Xenon 2*, this new computer software label is an off-shoot from Rhythm King, home to such pop music luminaries as Betty Boo and S'Express. At last, the release of their critical first title is almost upon us.



The end-of-level foes are big and fast. Apart from this dragon you'll have to confront a giant living statue and a vicious minotaur.



Baddies are typically 32 x 32 pixels big, and there can be up to ten of them on screen at any one time. Your character is 48 x 32 pixels, with 10 frames of walking animation and 8 frames for the attacking poses.

SOUND AND VISION

The thing that first grabs your attention are *Gods'* superlative graphics (often the case with Bitmap games). As with *Xenon 2* and *Speedball 2* they're drawn by the very talented Mark Coleman.

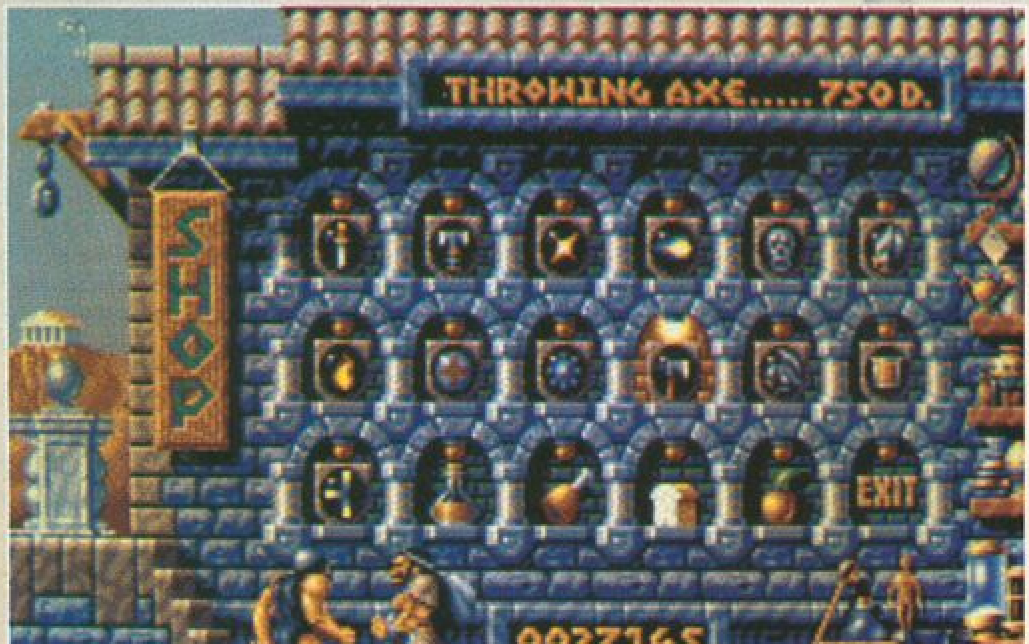
The detailed 16-colour backgrounds scroll smoothly in eight directions at a speedy 17 frames per second - and this is on the ST! This and *Turrican 2* must hail the dawning of a new age for ST owners starved of good scrolling games.

As with *Speedball 2* the music will be written by Nation 12, while Simon Rogers is responsible for the in-game sound effects.

IN THE THRALL OF THE GODS

Gods bears a strong (though it turns out to be superficial) resemblance to the arcade game *Black Tiger* (converted some time ago by US Gold). Set in mythological Greece, you control a strapping hulk of a man on a quest to defeat the evil ruler of the Underworld. Your appointment with destiny will lead you on a trek through a ruined Greek city, a desecrated Temple and labyrinthine catacombs to the entrance to Hell. The four levels (each split into three sub-levels) are depicted in a distinct graphical style and feature increasingly tough and intelligent baddies to overcome.

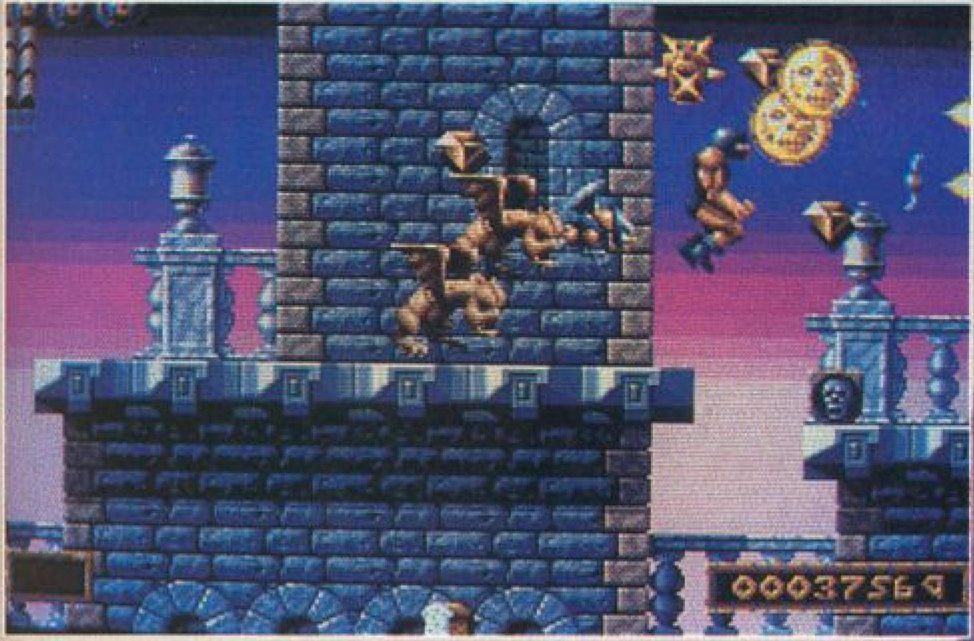
The power behind the code is Steve Tall, who seems to spend a fair bit of his valuable time shuttling between his home in Newcastle and the Bitmap's Wapping HQ. Along with Eric Matthews, fellow game designer and founder Bitmap, they've been working on the game for around a year now. From what we've seen it looks like all that effort has been well worth it. *Gods* should be hitting the shelves in the next couple of weeks.



Gold and jewels can be picked up from slain monsters and unlocked chests, which you can spend at the shops situated at the end and mid-way through each level. On offer are fifteen varieties of weapon (including magic as well as the more mundane axe, daggers and throwing stars - you can carry up to three different weapon types at one time), restore health, and so on. Best is the faithful familiar, who will fly around the screen, intelligently picking out your enemies and attacking them for you.

PUZZLE POWER

Progress isn't achieved by just hacking your way through horde after horde of ugly critters. The only exit from each level is via a locked door,



Attack of the Harpies from Hell! The rapidly-draining jar in the bottom left of the screen indicates how much life energy you have left. Empty it and you've lost a life - lucky you've got two more! There's also a password system to allow you to skip levels you're proficient at. However, the Bitmaps have packed so many hidden features into each level that repeat playing may reveal special surprises, such as a concealed pathway to the treasure room or a heap of secret bonuses.

BRAINY BYTES

On the first level the enemy monsters behave just like most of their ilk, i.e. very stupidly. It's not until the second level that they show signs that their youth wasn't entirely misspent and that they earned the odd GCSE in Player Killing at school.

Monsters will start to hunt you down, leaping from platform to platform in pursuit, taking the more optimum routes depending on how clever they are. This intelligence spreads to self-preservation: some monsters will actively try and avoid your shots to a lesser or greater extent.

The more avaricious monsters will seek out treasure items or weapons and try to make off with them rather than attack you. A well-aimed shot will put paid to their nefarious plans and you can retrieve the nicked item for yourself. Some problems require that you cunningly manipulate a monster's greed and intelligence.

A simple example occurs fairly on in the game: a valuable power-up is located behind a spike trap and there are no switches to turn it off. On trots a thieving baddy. Give him a couple of seconds and he'll grab the bonus, and try to escape off screen. If you quickly drop a gold item that you're carrying then the sneaky so-and-so will do a U-turn and head for the more valuable prize, walking neatly past the spikes (they don't affect him, of course). When he gets close, let the meany have it and pick up both goodies for yourself.

So how's it done? Basically each monster's behaviour is governed by a wealth of statistics, such as speed of movement and firing rate, how far they can 'see' when facing you (you can even sneak up behind these villains), how good they are at avoiding shots (dodgy devils) and whether they'll swarm before attacking (i.e. stay back until they've got a few mates along).

Most important are a monster's primary and secondary objectives. Generally a monster will always do it's utmost to achieve the primary aim and, if this isn't possible, try for the secondary one. These objectives can range from the obvious (attack the player) to seeking out bonus items or tripping switches.

The hardest thing from the programming point of view is making sure that the routines are fast as well as workable. Steve and Eric have been perfecting the intelligence code for well over four months, but now it's ready they are deservedly proud of their achievement. These are villains with character and personality traits, and are much more of a challenge than your usual game nasty.

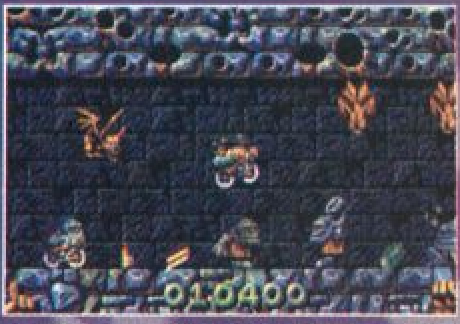
ACE PREPLAY

👍	👎
● Amazingly fast and smooth full-screen multidirectional scrolling for the ST, with no skimping on the colour and detail in the backgrounds either. ● Huge and speedy sprites - the end-of-level guardians are particularly impressive. ● Monsters act with real intelligence for once, and add some clever gameplay twists to the fairly standard plot. ● Lots of puzzles add depth to the basic hack-'em formula, plus loads of secret rooms and passageways to be discovered by the experienced player. ● Gameplay tailors itself to the player's ability (or lack of it).	● The game's plot is a bit bog standard (a minor point, really).

and you've got to find the key. Unfortunately the key may be some way away in a hidden room, which will only be revealed when a series of puzzles are solved or tasks completed.

There are switches to trip, that may or may not help your progress by activating or disabling traps and causing hidden passageways, chests or even monsters to appear. Sometimes more than one switch will have to be tripped or certain objects will have to be taken from one location to another before the required result is achieved. You can carry up to three objects at any given time. Sound effects are used as clues to the off-screen effects of your actions, i.e. you'll hear doors opening or traps starting up.

Steve and Eric's puzzle manager can handle up to 100 knotty problems per level. When the player reaches certain 'puzzle' locations the routine checks to see whether up to three preset conditions have been met (i.e. switches tripped/not tripped, locations visited, objects held - there are seventeen possible) resulting in one of fourteen possible events (i.e. doors or passageways opening, monsters appearing, traps turning on/off).



"I want to ride my bicycle," yells The Kid. "So do we," reply the baddies in harmony.

MAGIC POCKETS

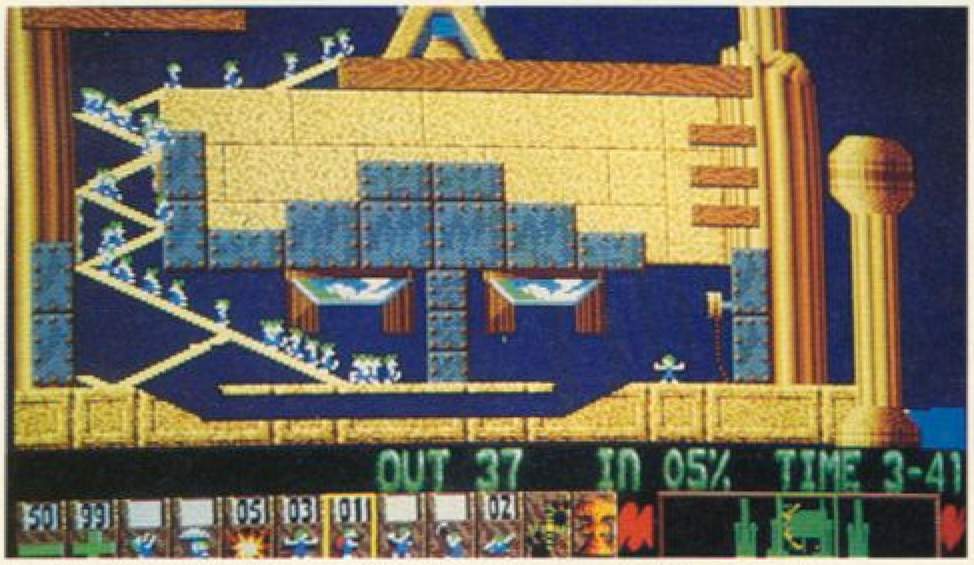
Due for an early summer release, programmed by Sean Griffiths is this strange tale of The Bitmap Kid.The trendy little tyke, all baseball cap and Rebok trainers, is on a mission to rescue his toys, stolen from him by a marauding band of beastly bandits. The game is spread over four multidirectional-scrolling platform-packed levels, which are in turn split into several sub-levels. Each level The Kid has a new weapon to use, based on one of the four elements: air, water, fire and earth.

The first level is the only one fully working at the moment, and here the Kid wields powerful tornados as be bounces around in pursuit of his stolen bike. Pressing fire causes the Kid to tuck his hand in his pocket and have a rummage for a tornado. The longer you hold down fire the more powerful the tornado and the more swollen the Kid's pockets get. At maximum power The Kid can jump into the tornado he's just thrown and it will spin him around the screen for a while, bumping off all the baddies in his way.

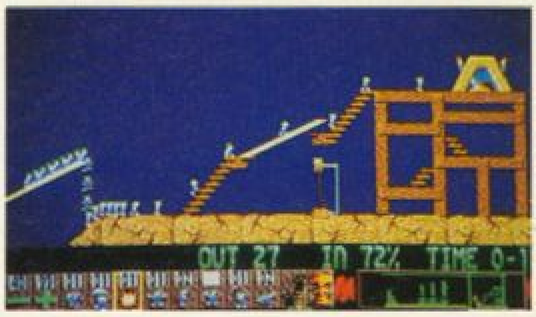
Along the way there are bonus sweets to pick up and various power-ups to collect, many reminsicent of *Rainbow Islands*, one of Sean's favourite games. Very amusing is the bubble gum machine - it'll cause The Kid to blow a huge bubble which you can use to reach high platforms.

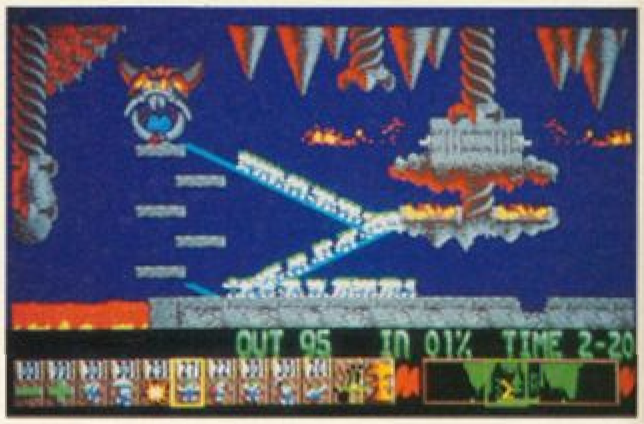
Using a slightly simplified version of the intelligence routines used in *Gods*, Sean has given the monsters their own characters - one will even run around the level trying to reach the bike before you! At the end of the level there's a race based on the toy just recovered. On the first level it's a hilariously frantic bike race with the monsters, where you keep pedalling by waggling the joystick.

The later levels sound like they'll be even more novel: in the water level you throw clouds that'll rain on the ground below, causing plant platforms to grow! *Magic Pockets* is lots of fun - look out for an update on the game's progress nearer its June release date.



The old double-tunnel trick! By burrowing through the earth, you can unite the lemmings on the left hand section and then bridge your way to freedom. The angle of the bridge is vital. An error in your positioning will result in a toasting from the jets in the left hand wall.





With only 18 seconds left on the clock, success is unlikely. At least you've avoided the fiendish trap. (Top). The easy levels offer plenty of all the icons, so you have a choice of escape routes. (Above).

LEMMINGS

After months of hype and more demos than you can shake a stick at, is the *Lemmings* experience worth jumping at?

Originality, playability and excellent graphics? Too good to be true? Not in *Lemmings'* case. Psygnosis' latest is a complete departure from their usual straight-laced hard-nosed style. Although an entire disk has been expended on the opening sequence (some things never change), the rest of this incredibly playable and ultra-cute romp remains decidedly focused by Psygnosis standards. The aim of the game is simple, there is only one view of the levels, and the whole feel of the program benefits as a result.

Your aim is to guide a varying number of these obedient creatures through around 120 different levels of increasing difficulty. Depending on the nature of the level, you will start with an appropriate time limit and target percentage of lemmings to escort through the exit at the end of the level. Fail to save enough lemmings in the permitted time will result in an "encouraging" try-again message.

Control of lemmings is limited but varied. They will automatically carry on doing whatever they're doing unless they're told otherwise. At the start, as they pour (again, at a definable rate) through the trapdoor at the top of the screen, they will walk right once they hit the ground. And they'll keep walking right until something stops them. If they just walk into a wall, they'll turn around and start walking left. However, lemmings are just as happy to walk off cliffs, into traps and through fires if they happen to come across them. And this is where the game comes into its own.

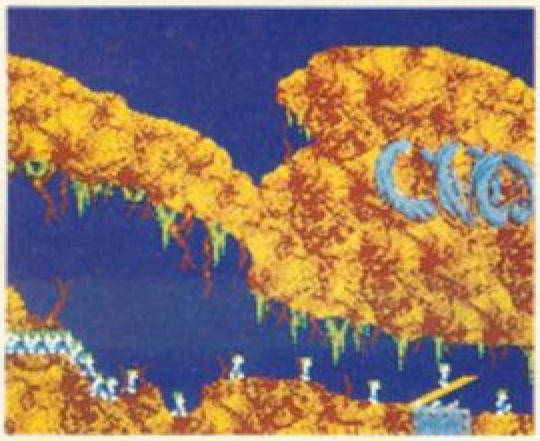
By clicking on an icon and then a lemming, you can endow him with a particular ability. You can make them dig, climb up, parachute down, build bridges, block other lemmings and explode.

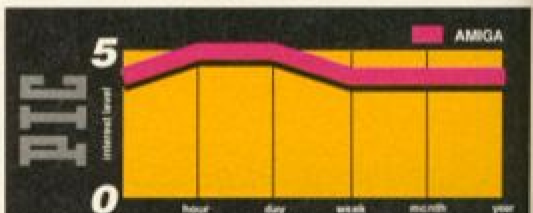
Each level forces you to prioritise constantly. Some put the lemmings in danger from the very start but give you more time to plan your escape. Others offer little danger to begin with but have strict time limits. The levels are broken down into difficulty levels, ranging from Fun through Tricky, Taxing and up to Mayhem. A level with lots of pillars in the way set at Fun will probably be set with plenty of horizontal diggers. However, on Taxing setting, a similar stage will demand more thought, climbing over obstacles and digging backwards in order to make the most of each icon.

The charm of *Lemmings* is two-fold. The animation of the little characters and their behavior are both appealing and challenging, and the puzzles presented in the game will keep you thinking for a good long while. Unlike lots of puzzle games, the nature of the landscapes offers the chance to have a go at digging, climbing and bridging in most situations, rather than totally boxing you in.

Lemmings is a fine game. Although its appeal will inevitably wain once all the levels have been completed, the precision and control facilitated over each lemming is enough to make it worth playing anyway.

● Jim Douglas





Immediate cute-factor scores extremely high. Once you've taught the little blighters who's boss and you've learnt some basic tactics to deal with big bunches of lemmings, slowing them down and speeding them up, etc, the fun escalates to the top!

ACE RATING

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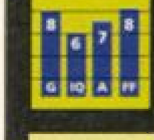

AMIGA

Despite the fact that *Lemmings* appears to be a simple-enough game, its playability is largely down to the ease of icon-controlled play. The control method is virtually flawless, allowing rapid changes of control over a fast-moving lemming. The music, too adds a lot to the atmosphere with lots of 'Off to Work We Go' style tunes helping the little creatures on their way.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	Late Febuary
AMIGA	£24.99	Out Now
IBM PC	£24.99	Late Febuary

No other versions planned

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MEET THE GREMLINS!

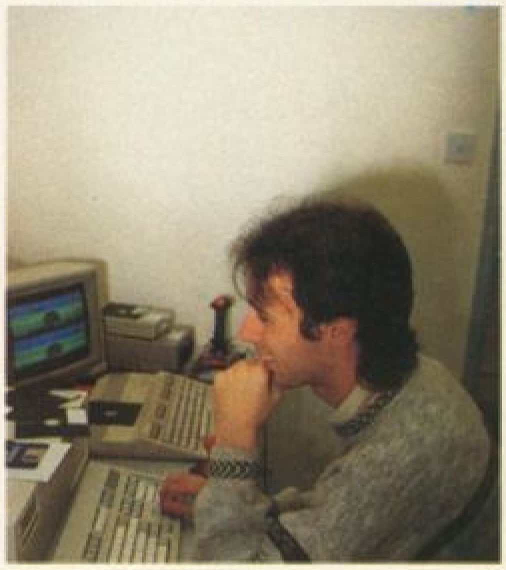
The company that kicked off with a string of Tony Crowther hits in the early Eighties, then sank to an all-time low with *Federation of Free Traders* and *Masters of the Universe*, is now astonishing everyone by heading for the big, big time. What's going on?

Ian Stuart reckons he's swept the gremlins out of Gremlin. 'Time was when we'd release a game because we had to,' he admits, 'but those times are past. We won't bring out a product now unless it's absolutely 100%.'

Sounds like a load of bull, but here's a company who's not only pioneering some tremendous CD software (see our *Little Devils* feature in issue 41) but have also brought us a string of superlative releases over the last few months...

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, for example, is 'the best pure-blooded arcade race game around at the moment' (says our David Upchurch, a man who keeps his finger on the stick); *Team Suzuki* was ACE Trailblazered for providing punters with the hottest bike action ever; *Toyota Celica GT Rally* was slightly flawed in the speed stakes but was otherwise superb – titles like these would keep many software houses happy for a couple of years, but Gremlin have been driving them out onto the tarmac at a relentless pace.

Gremlin aren't just turning out computer hits – they're also putting the boot into the console market. They've nearly finished *Greg Norman's Power Golf* for the NES and – as you can see elsewhere on these pages – are also putting games onto the Game Boy and PC Engine. ACE braved the winter snows and a seven hour train journey to find out what's going on in Sheffield. This is what we found...

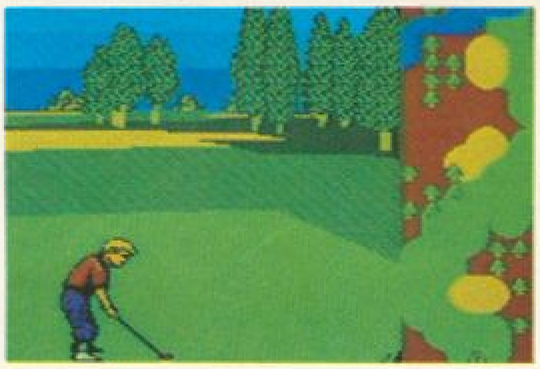

Ashley Bennett has a tough job – making the C64 version of *Lotus Esprit* live up to the reputation it acquired on 16-bit. 'It's ve-rrrr-y difficult,' he agrees, 'mainly because of the speed of the machine.' What he had on-screen, however, looked promising – and surprisingly fast.

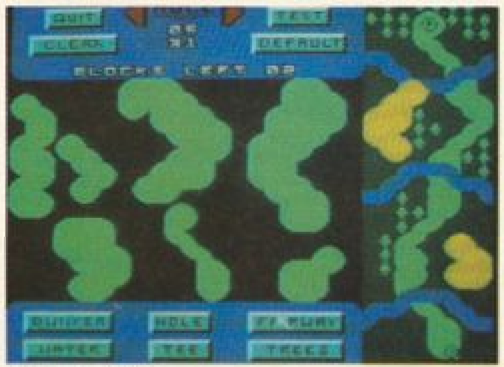
RAISING THE *FLAG*

Flag is currently under development and as yet there are no screens we can show you. However, it's already showing a lot of promise.

First, the scenario has a simple basis: you must capture the flag of your opponents' village. This is built on with strategic and historical considerations as you manipulate the lives of 50 different villagers through the ages, developing military and commercial expertise and strength.

The game features some superb graphics in the early versions, with buildings showing clearly the change in architectural style in the village through the ages. Definitely a project to keep an eye on – stand by for a future ACE report.

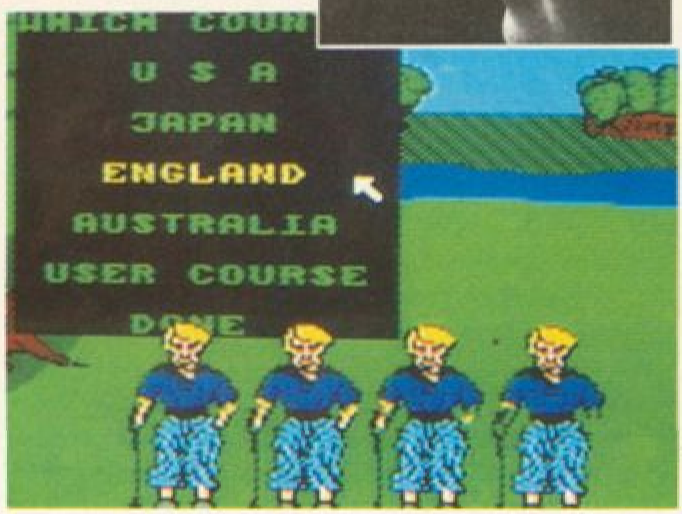

Greg Norman's Power Golf* has 3D course projection accurate to 1 inch (less than the width of a golf ball). Gremlin claim that the finished product will also feature instant 3D screen updates and different camera views for a 'good, all-round picture.' The game is being developed by gremlins Chris Harvey, Scott Guest and Simon Blake, with graphics by Tim May....



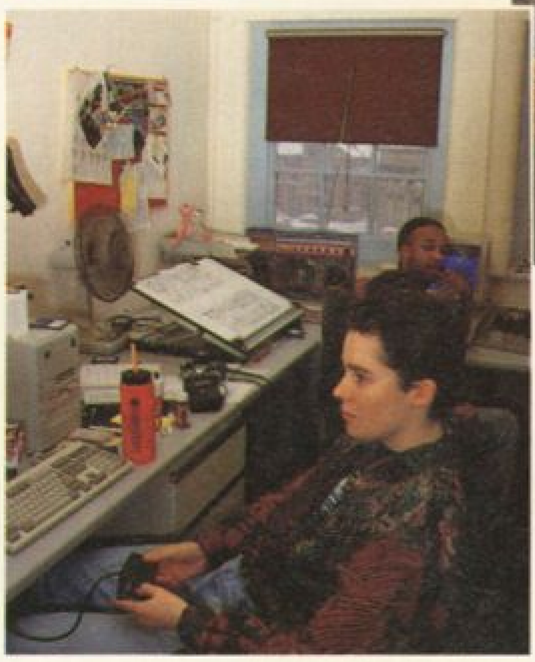
◄ Best of all, *GNPG* (far left) has a powerful course designer option – so you not only get 20 pre-defined courses but the ability to design as many more as you like

◄' If you want to be a programmer, persistence is the most important virtue' Scott Guest

Chris Harvey: a programmer for seven years since he did *Airwolf 64*. 'I definitely prefer programming consoles,' he declares, 'everything's already there – you don't have to write routines for everything yourself. The only drawback on the NES is the small amount of time you have for accessing the screen.'

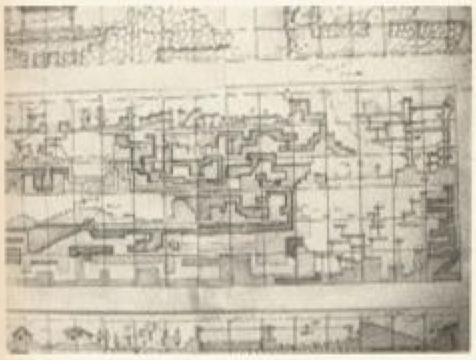


◄ *GNPG* features a multi-player option for up to four golfers. You get more rule types than most other games as well, together with variable levels of interaction, realistic computer opponents, and three skill levels

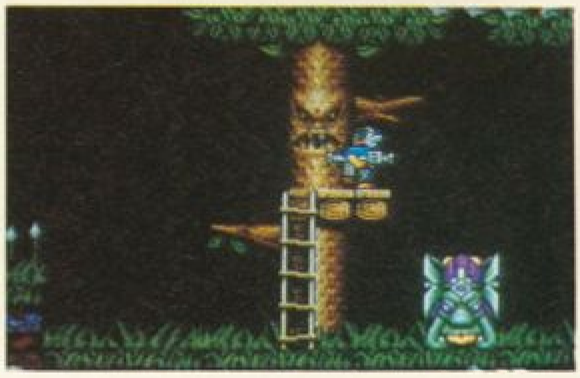


Alex (right) and Bernie (far right) putting the ritz into *Impossamole* on the PC Engine. Thanks to their silky skills – and the power of the machine – this conversion promises to be something quite special – which is just as well because NEC have adopted *Impossamole* as an official software mascot. You can hear Alex wax lyrical about the PC Engine on the ACE Interactive Phoneline beginning March 8th

> *'If I had to put money on one UK software house today, I'd put it on Gremlin.' High praise indeed from the head of another major UK software house, who naturally wished to remain anonymous!*

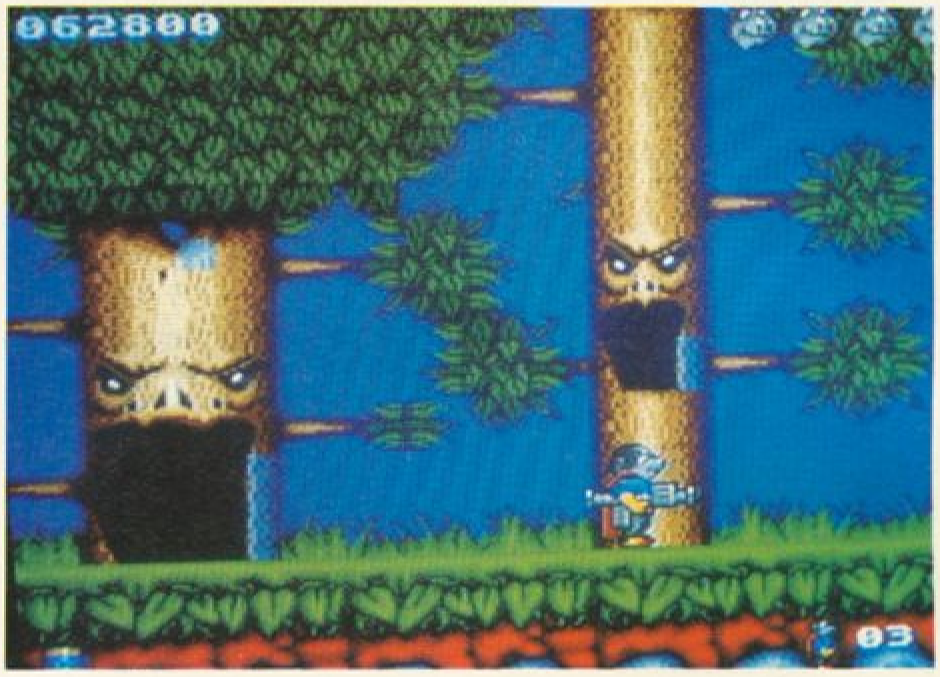


Just one portion of Bernie's vast map for *Impossamole* on the PC Engine. If you can crack this, you're hard...



Impossamole on the PC Engine. Smooth scrolling, pretty, and eminently playable

Alex's NEC development system makes developing for the machine a doddle. Well, almost. 'It's just a huge box of RAM,' he explains, 'I write the source code using a wordprocessor on a PC, compile it, and then squirt down into the box, which behaves exactly like a vast cartridge. I can then play it on the PC Engine in front of me...'



Looking pretty, thanks to the PC Engine's graphics capabilities and Bernie's draughtmanship: *Impossamole*. The PC Engine can put 512 colours on-screen at once, and *Impossamole* frequently puts up at least 400

BUILDING *UTOPIA*

Gremlin are currently developing an advanced world-management game, provisionally entitled *Utopia*. Your objective is to create the ideal society on a planet featuring outposts of alien civilisations in competition with your own.

In your struggle to evolve society, you can influence everything from the birth rate to military budgets. Depending on which path you follow at any time, different inventions may be conceived, different conflicts entered, and different outcomes encountered.

There are over twenty different facilities you can install for your population, ranging from workshops to missile launchers and sports complexes. During your evolution, you'll encounter up to ten different alien races, each of which is tougher to overcome and employs more advanced technology.

Watch out for more news of this and screenshots of the work of programmers Graham Ing and Robert Crack in a later ACE issue.

Gremlin are also developing *Mindbender* – a previous 16-bit release – for the Game Boy. The conversion features over 120 screens and is currently keeping the Gremlin games testers busy – as you can see here. Gremlin's Game Boy development system allows instant switching between programming and playtesting

News
0839 121105

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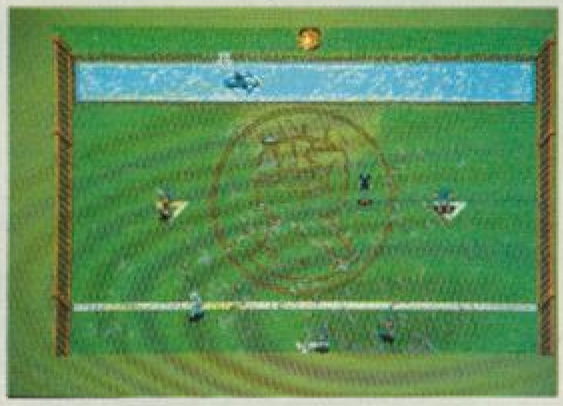
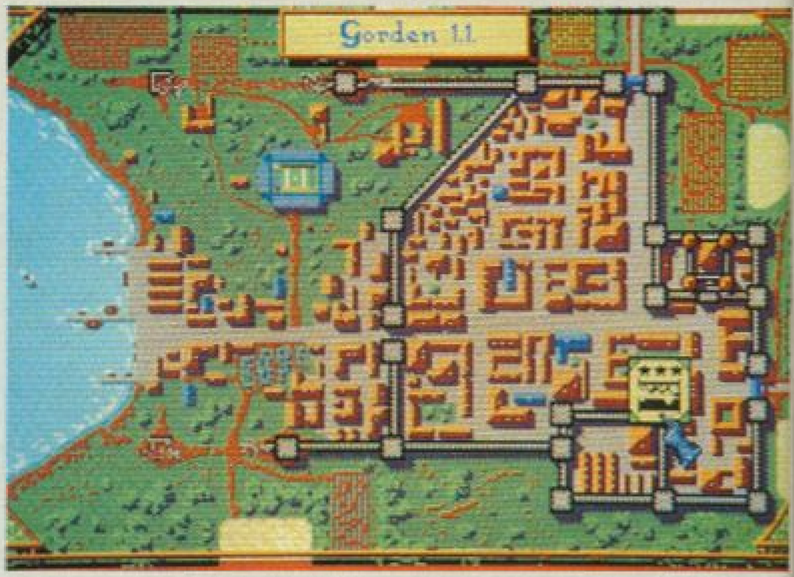
Check out the ACE Interactive Phoneline this month and you can hear Ian Stuart, boss of Gremlin, giving his views on the future of the industry, and PC Engine programmer Alex Davies waxing lyrical about the power of the NEC machine. Don't miss it! The lads will be on-line from March 8th.



A brave player leapt into the moat to try and plonk the Flonk in the pot for a hefty two points (just throwing it in earns one point due to the lack of risk and corresponding less excitement for the crowd).



Visit Gorden - the Ghold Rivierra. ▶

M·U·D·S

Throw a Flonk today - you know it makes sense - in RAINBOW ARTS' fantasy sport sim

Ghold - land of *The Guardian* reader? Rather than incarcerate its criminals (that's bang them in the slammer to you), they're sent out into society to prove their worth doing menial tasks such as sewing mail bags, breaking rocks or, if they can pass the rigorous physical, entertaining the law-abiding populace by playing that Mean Ugly Dirty Sport *M.U.D.S.*

You've travelled to Gorden, a small and less than prosperous town nestling in the far south-west of Ghold, to coach its ailing M.U.D.S. team and bring glory to the citizens of Gorden.

At the start of the game you're presented with a large map of Gorden. You can visit various locations in town by clicking on them. First thing is to find a hotel to put your team up in. Then you can review your team's stats, heal injured players, buy or sell players in the slave market, check out your finances at the bank and, if things look grim, borrow money from loan sharks.

Soon you'll want to test your team's mettle in the stadium. Each team consists of five players: two defensive, one midfield and two attackers. Before the match you can juggle your reserves and set up your optimum team. You can set a player's style, i.e. aggressive, offensive, defensive and tactical, and when not under your direct control they'll behave accordingly.

The playfield is a vertically scrolling pitch, at each end of which there's a thin shark-infested moat and a wooden pot. Points are scored by getting Flonks, small flightless and exceptionally stupid reptilian birds, into these pots. After seven Flonks the team with the most points wins. Players can also win by taking enough opponents out of play and bringing the team's number below the legal minimum.

There are two control methods to choose between: personal control of player nearest the Flonk or select the player with a cursor. Although the first method will be the one most familiar to most, the most enjoyment is ultimately reaped from the second due to its flexibility. Control is by keyboard, joystick or mouse (the latter is recommended, especially if using the second control style).

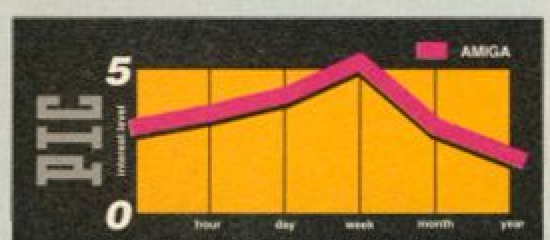
A large arrow indicates the player under your direct control. When in possession, you can throw a Flonk by holding down fire, moving the crosshair that appears to where you want the Flonk to land, then releasing fire. Control automatically switches to the player nearest the downed Flonk. (In the second control mode you can switch between players in a similar way.)

Tapping fire causes your player to attack the nearest opponent. (In the second control method the same action causes the Flonk to be passed to your player if you're not in possession or near an opponent). Tapping fire twice will make you player to beat up the nearest opponent. Indiscriminate thumping may result in the ref calling a foul.

At first, play is pretty frustrating. There's an 'Action' option to get straight into the game but this is no *Speedball* or *Kick Off*; play is substantially slower and control takes quite a while - perhaps a little too long - to get the hang of. However, perseverance proves that this slower pace allows more opportunity for planned and subtle play, which is very satisfying when mastered.

The full 'Campaign', where the team management elements come into play, adds a huge amount of depth as you take your team travelling around the towns and cities of Ghold in search of game and fortune. *M.U.D.S.* will definitely not appeal to everybody, and you'd be well advised to give it a good try out before you buy. But do give it time - the game's a lot more fun than first impressions suggest.

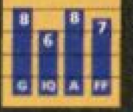
● **David Upchurch**



On your first game you'll leap straight into the action and are liable to be less than impressed, especially if you're expecting a *Speedball 2* beater. Patience, impetuous one! After some practice the sport is actually great fun, with more room for thoughtful and tactical play than most other sims. Add the humorous and beautifully designed fantasy world of Ghold as the campaign backdrop and you've got a long-lasting package.

ACE RATING

808



AMIGA

Not an Amiga pusher. The still graphics are a wonder to behold, full of colour, detail and humour. The in-game sprite graphics are small, but recognisable as the various creatures of Ghold and nicely animated. Pitch scrolling is a tad jerky, but you don't notice during play. Special mention to the excellent atmospheric music. The only major niggle is the lengthy disc accessing before and after a match - very poor.

RELEASE DETAILS

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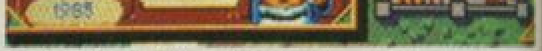
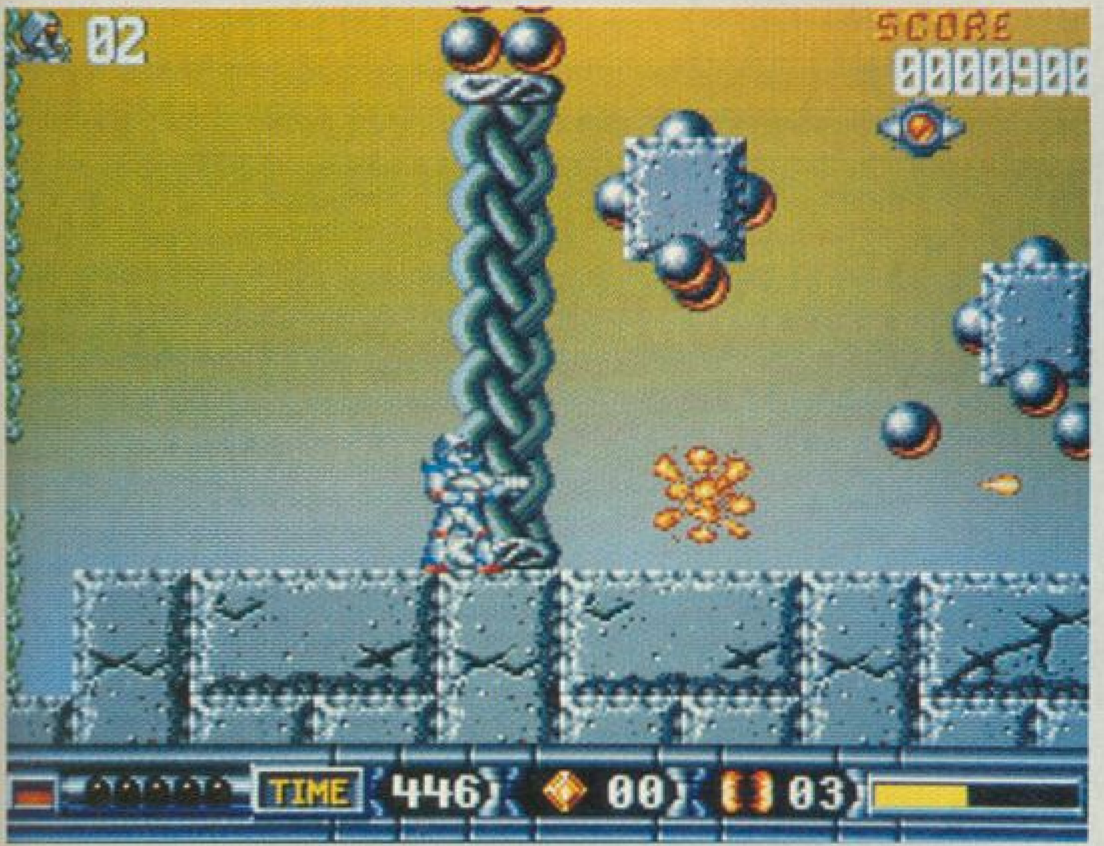
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW



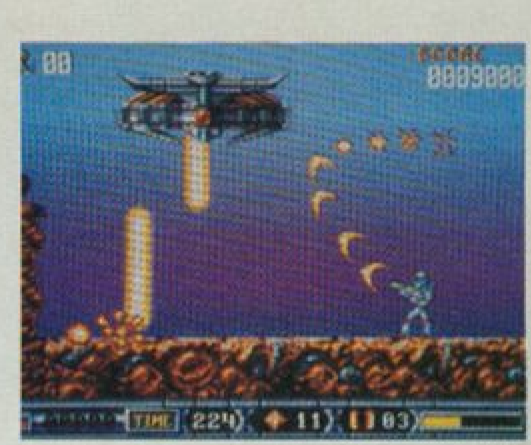
Eeeh, it's like a cattle market. Scroll through the beefy beauties on offer using the arrow buttons and find out the stats of any you fancy by clicking on the '?' panel.

The Gorden boys. When you've fixed up some lodgings you can review your teams. Clicking on a player brings up a sheet up a sheet indicating their strengths and weaknesses. Poor players can be sold at the slave market.

Fancy a couple of jars down the pub? Because players always hang out at the taverns this is the best place to get inside info on any upcoming games and perhaps bribe or hire opposing players. If you feel up to it why not start a brawl and try *to weaken the opposing* team that way? The downside of this approach is that the local police will almost certainly fine you and may even impound one of your players.



AMIGA - These lumpy blocks rain down metallic spheres, which bounce around and generally add to Turry's problems.



AMIGA - The end-of-World 2's baddy is fast and deadly. It bounces left and right across the top of the scream, pouring massive laser bolts and missiles on poor Turry cowering at the bottom of the screen. Beam weapon time, me thinks!

ACE GRAPHICS

TURRICAN II

The original *Turrican* was arcade-perfect frenetic fun. Can RAINBOW ARTS' sequel possibly be better?

The trouble with being a hero is that you're expected to be one all the time. You do something brave and bold and rather than being allowed to take a well-earned rest on your laurels you're cajoled into saving the Universe all over again.

Take Turrican, for example. Five years ago he saved us all from the dream demon Morgul and now he's asked to do the same all over again, this time against a rogue battle computer with ideas above its circuits. Perhaps if he succeeds this time they'll leave him in peace. Mind you, if he fails he'll be left in pieces.

So what's the job? Basically Turry has got to scoot around five planet's worth of platforms and ledges, split into 12 levels. Along the way Turry has to destroy any alien scum he meets, ultimately confronting a massive end-of-world guardian. Having killed this meany he jumps into a spaceship for a danger-fraught trip to the next planet.

Turry starts the game with a single-shot gun firing left or right. However, holding down fire produces a long-range beam weapon which can be rotated a full 360 degrees. Pulling down and pressing fire drops a mine. Pressing the space bar sends two fire waves sweeping across the screen, leaving devastation in its wake - but be warned that supplies are limited. Pulling down and pressing space turns Turry in a spinning spiked ball that can whizz left and right, destroying all in its path - this is particularly handy for getting through cramped tunnels.

Invisible blocks (revealed by pumping a shot into them) and secret passageways and rooms contain bags of bonuses to be picked up, like temporary shields, multi-way fire, wide-blast lasers, energy restorers and extra lives - you know the score.

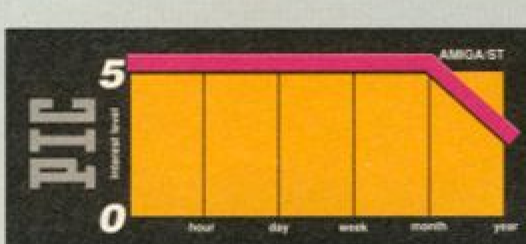
As with the original *Turrican*, the basic plot may not be much cop, but the implementation certainly is. The scrolling is fast and smooth, with some gorgeous parallax (yes, even on the ST occasionally!). Sound effects are good too, with some suitably punchy tunes to back the on-screen action. On the Amiga there are voice samples telling you which bonuses you've just picked up. The sprites are great - they look good and move with frightening speed and intelligence.

There are loads of great little graphic touches. The gushing waterfalls, rope bridges bending under your weight, trails of air bubbles left by the underwater aliens and Turry's frozen breath when on the ice world are just a few examples of the marvellous attention to detail.

But this technical excellence would count for nought if *Turrican II* played like a brick - but it most certainly doesn't. The game's supremely playable, and although it gets very tough at times it's never so so bad that you want to give up - if anything it reinforces the urge to have another go.

The magic is back? Too right it is!

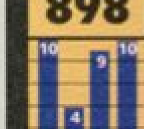
● **David Upchurch**



I think the curve speaks for itself. *Turrican II*'s wonderful to look at and even better to play. Believe me, buy this and you'll not be letting your trigger finger rest for many a long month.

ACE RATING

898

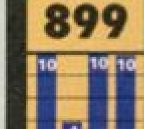


AMIGA

Definitely a case of familiarity breeding content. Apart from the colourful sky shading and the sampled voices, the improvements on the original *Turrican* aren't immediately obvious. However, the excellent parallaxed backdrops are even smoother, the aliens' intelligence is better and the gameplay has been tweaked and polished until it sparkles. I expect fans of the original will already have placed their orders; newcomers should join the back of the deservedly long queue pronto.

ACE RATING

899



ATARI ST

Incredible! Although not as quite as slick as the Amiga version, what Rainbow Arts have achieved on the humble ST would be considered by many to be impossible! Gasp at the parallaxed backgrounds! Quake at the speed of alien attack! Scream at the size and ferocity of the end-of-level monsters! Even the tunes are great rather than grating! I don't think there are enough superlatives and exclamation marks on my keyboard to express how good this game is. Without any doubt the best shoot-'em-up on the ST.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£8.99/£12.99	OUT NOW
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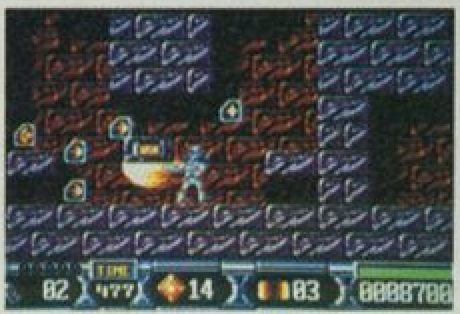
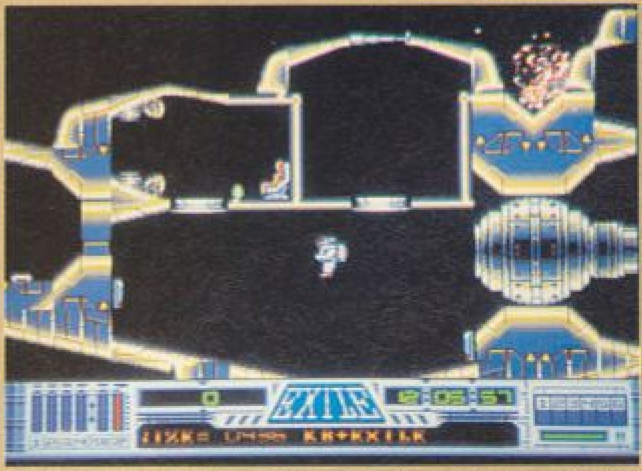
SPECTRUM	£8.99/£12.99	OUT NOW



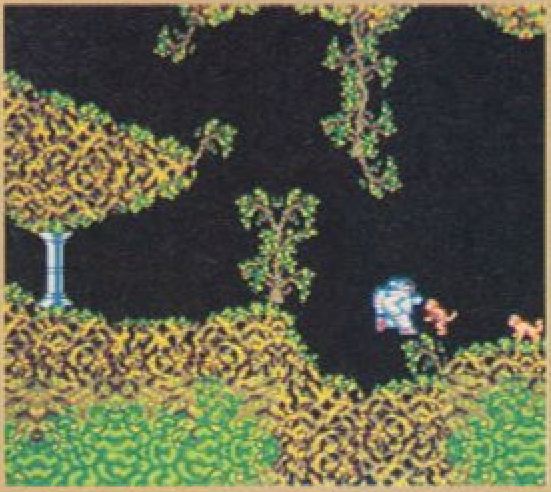
ATARI ST - Hidden blocks are only revealed by a lucky shot. Pumping shots into the blocks make bonuses drop out. Collect them before they float away.

EXILE-ENT

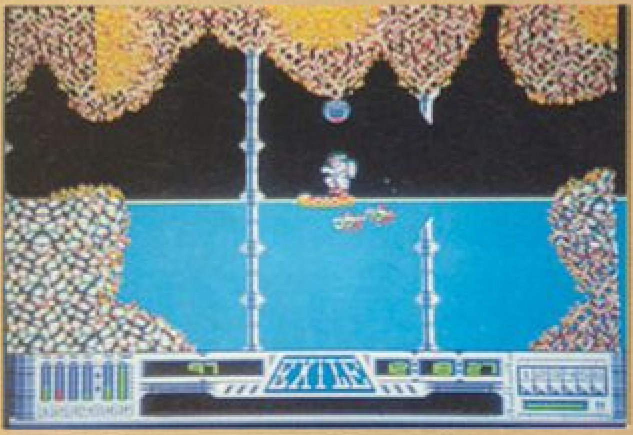
AUDIOGENIC may have been a little quiet of late, but they certainly haven't been idle. ACE looks at two of their forthcoming games.



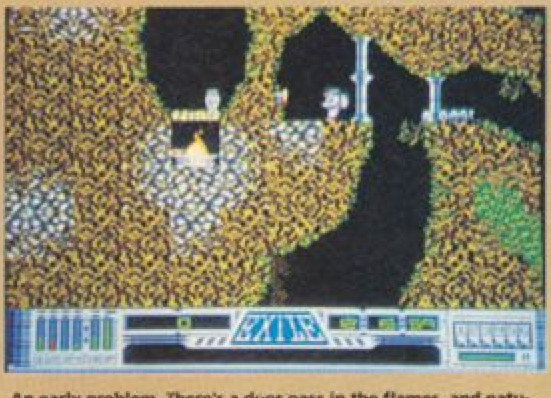
The start of the mission, and you discover the deserted hulk of the colonists' starship. The graphics were redrawn just before ACE's visit, and some of the graphic blocks don't quite line up as yet, but everything will look fine for *Exile*'s eventual release.



The mischievous imps cause no end of trouble by shoving you about. Some will be in possession of useful items which they'll hand over if you give them a frog to eat.



The piranhas will eat you alive if you try to swim in this pool, but with the aid of this raft you can cross in safety.



An early problem. There's a duor pass in the flames, and naturally you're somewhat susceptible to fire! Luckily you've found an empty flask, which can be filled with water from a pool and then left on the hatch above the fire. Pressing the button opens the hatch and drops the water on the fire, thus putting it out.

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Far out in deep space, colonists on an alien planet have stopped transmitting reports back to Earth. Something is wrong, and as the only space traveller within several lightyears of the colony world, it's up to you to investigate. Thus begin your adventures in *Exile*.

With the aid of a jetpack, you have to negotiate a labyrinth of caves. Control is akin to *Asteroids*: simple rotate and thrust. Weapons can be picked up to help you combat the plethora of xenomorphs and 'droids you'll encounter.

"Hmmm," you're probably thinking, "Sounds a bit like *Thrust*" - and you'd be right! However, these similarities are not surprising considering that Jeremy Smith, author of *Thrust*, wrote the prototype C64 *Exile*, with Peter Irvin (responsible for the excellent BBC game *Starship Command* - remember that?) helping out on the Amiga and ST versions. Peter reckons that all told they've spent around 4 man years working on the project.

Jeremy and Peter have spent a lot of time refining the game's *movement routines* - all objects and creatures have mass, inertia, dynamics and even buoyancy (for underwater behaviour), and move accurately in the gravitational environment.

However, the game is far more than just another rotate, thrust 'n' blast affair (although this forms an enjoyably substantial part play). Real progress is only achieved by solving puzzles and completing tasks, the depth and complexity of which make the game akin to an adventure.

Games can be saved - which is just as well, because the map area is a huge 25 screens wide and 32 screens high in all! Peter says that it takes him around six hours to complete the game knowing all the puzzle solutions.

Exile is one of those games that may not look *like much from the screenshots but plays like a* dream. The action is fast and smooth, while the puzzles add depth to the basic formula. It's a game that deserves success - look out for its release in the next few weeks.

RECKLESS *WRECKERS*

M'aide! M'aide! Your ship is under attack from hordes of hostile alien blobs. The plasma pests stick to your hull and gradually seep through. Once inside they go on an orgy of destruction - if the damage level gets too high the ship will explode (which is not good!).

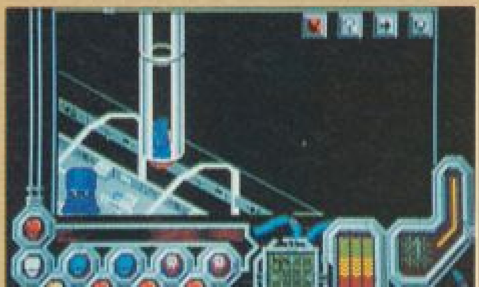
The ship's computer automatically senses that something's gone wrong and defrosts one of the three human crew from cryogenic suspension to deal with the crisis.

If you're quick you can try and nip the attack in the bud by manning the space hoover, which can suck up attacking blobs before they hit the station's hull. If this doesn't work you can don your spacesuit and fly around the outside of the ship, trying to mop up the blobs stuck to the hull. Should they get through you'll have to take the more dangerous option of re-entering the ship and blasting the aliens face-to-sucker.

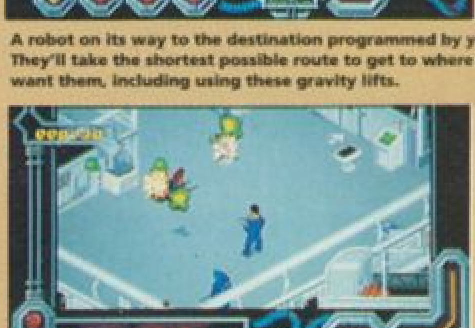
Luckily, you are not alone in your task - you have three 'droids at your disposal, each of which can be programmed to go to different parts of the ship and help clear the aliens. More robots (up to 10 max) can be built in the labs, but this takes time.

If your crew member's life energy drops to zero he gets 'taken over' by the aliens and becomes a giant indestructable marauding blob, which makes things pretty tricky for the next defrosted crew member. But pity the third and final crewman - he's got to face two of them!

Wreckers marks the welcome return of Denton Designs, famous for writing one of the first ever icon-driven adventures (*Shadowfire*) and such arcade-style blasts as *Mutants*, and should be out on Amiga and ST around the same time as *Exile*.



A robot on its way to the destination programmed by you. They'll take the shortest possible route to get to where you want them, including using these gravity lifts.



Zapping the slimeballs at close range - this is when you are at you most deadly and most vulnerable.

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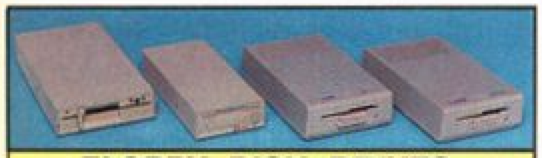
FLOPPY DISK DRIVES

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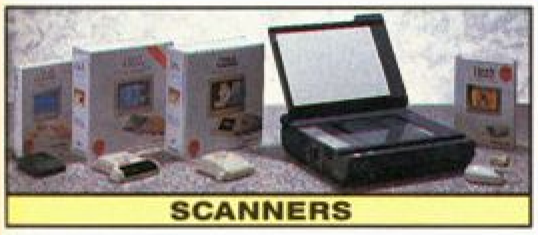
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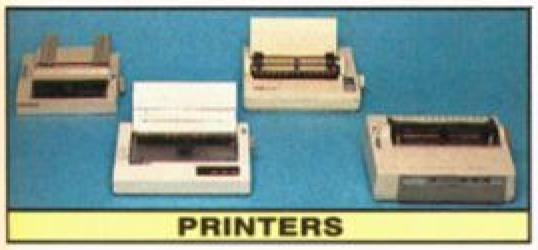
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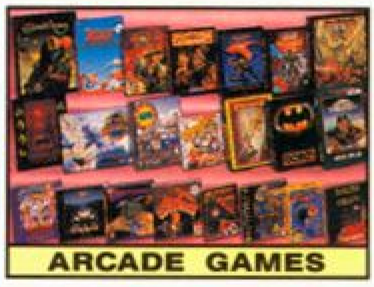
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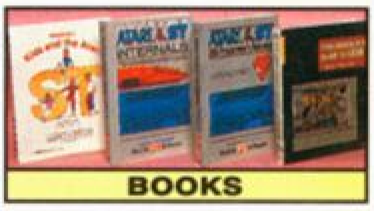
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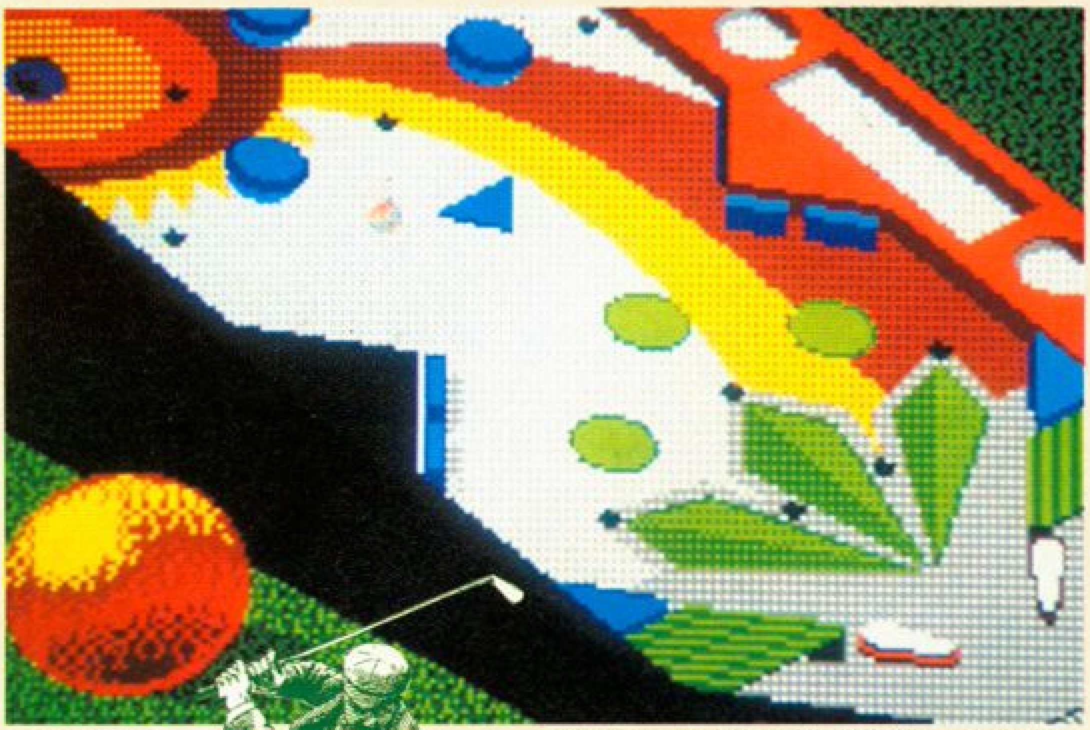
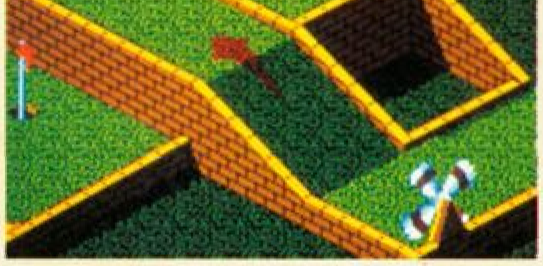


The Pin Table. Real flippers, real gravity and real frustration. Bounce the ball around to get extra points before exiting top left.

The Fans. After putting the ball, you activate the fans by frantic tapping on the controller. These blow the ball all around the course, hopefully into the hole at the end.



Z*any Golf* on the Amiga was a welcome antidote to the plethora of heavyweight golf-sims available for the machine. Its cartoon graphics and ease-of-use made it an ideal pick-up-and-play product.

The Megadrive version, with instant cartridge loading and top-notch graphics capabilities should be even better. Unfortunately, it's a mere shadow of its former self.

The aim of the game is to pot your ball in the hole at the end of each course, just like in "normal" crazy golf. Each course has a particular feature which - in most cases - turn the play area into a vaguely nightmarish place, like something out of the *Twilight Zone*. A jumping hamburger conceals the hole on one course, fans blow the ball around another and one whole level is played on a giant pinball table.

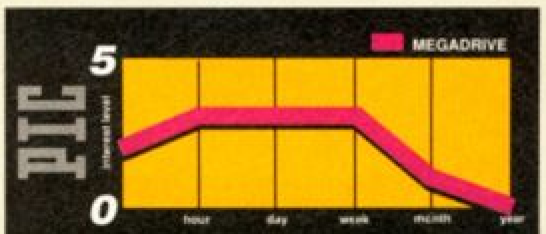
By clicking on the ball using a definable button, you can then drag the cursor away using the keypad do determine the strength of your shot. As the cursor moves away from the ball, a dotted line will appear between the two. Once you let go of the button, the ball will shoot off following the line of the cursor. You are entitled to a certain number of shots at each hole, depending on the difficulty level you have selected.

The ball bounces off walls and obstacles, and follows natural forces like gravity and inclines around the course.

Graphically, *Zany Golf* is pretty good, although it looks a little foggy around the edges. The animations of the features such as the hamburgers and windmills are well drawn, but the beautiful intro-screens (admittedly a distraction from the

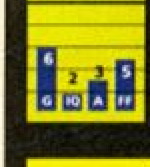
GYNOUG

Mythical hi-tech blasting anyone?



ACE RATING

500



MEGADRIVE

About as average as they come. At first it simply looks like another shoot-out game. And although, some of the graphics are impressive enough to hold your interest for a while, you'll end up feeling that you've played Gynoug a hundreds times before, albeit with a different lead character and perhaps a more spacey setting.

RELEASE DETAILS

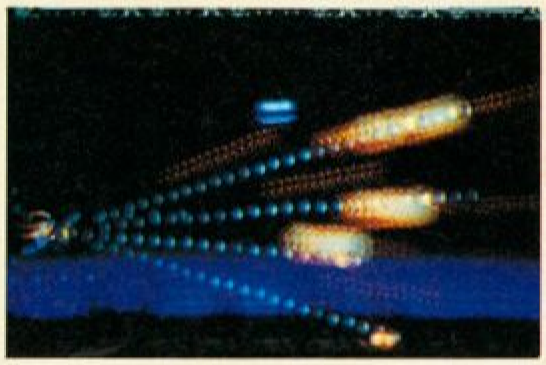
MEGADRIVE £34.99 OUT NOW

No other versions planned

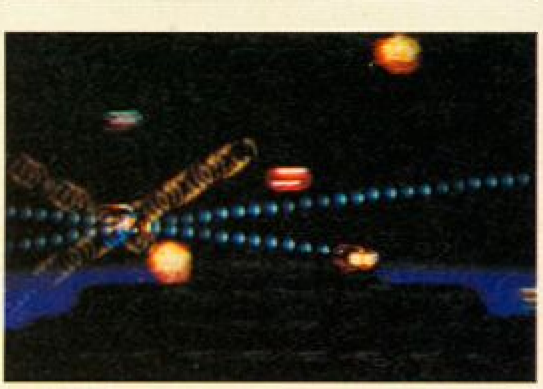
G*ynoug* is a peculiar game. It's basically an archetypal left-to-right scrolling shoot-out with absolutely all the features and qualities you'd expect. However, rather than piloting an atomic-powered starcruiser with plasma controls and retro lasers, you take control of a little man with wings and a loin-cloth.

Doesn't really sound like the makings of a worldbeating shoot-em-up does it?*Gynoug*, despite its Icarus interest is about as run-of-the-mill as the come. Other than storyline niceties and some innovative graphics touches - the character flies quite well and there are some pretty background details - it's exactly the same as about half of all the other shoot-em-ups on the Megadrive.

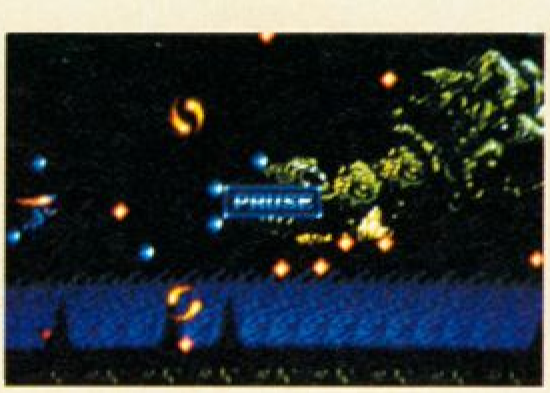
Once intro setups and options preliminaries have been dealt with, your hero appears on the left hand side of the screen, flapping his wings. While you get an impression of some pretty decent graphics, the nature of the gameplay doesn't really give you much of an opportunity to sit back and appreciate them.



The action-packed in-between stages and excellent frame updates make Gynoug good to look at, but less fun to play.



Multi-directional fire in full effect! Depending on which power-up icon you select, your fire can be switched around.



The end-of-level guardians form from disperate sections. Get as many hits of your Super Weapons in as possible NOW!

ZANY GOLF

ELECTRONIC ARTS convert yet another successful Amiga title onto the Megadrive...

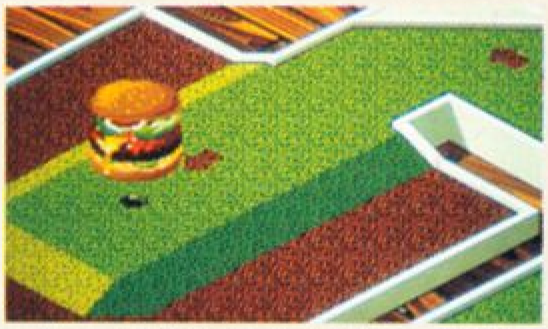
disk-access on other versions) have been removed. Instead you are presented with a miniaturised picture of the next course and some tips.

The amount of control afforded by the cursor is frankly limited. Quite how much blame can be apportioned to the fact that the keypad is considerably less precise than a mouse is uncertain. However, a far better job could have been done. The cursor is sluggish and jumps around in awkward steps. It's difficult to gauge your line and you end up wasting vital shots.

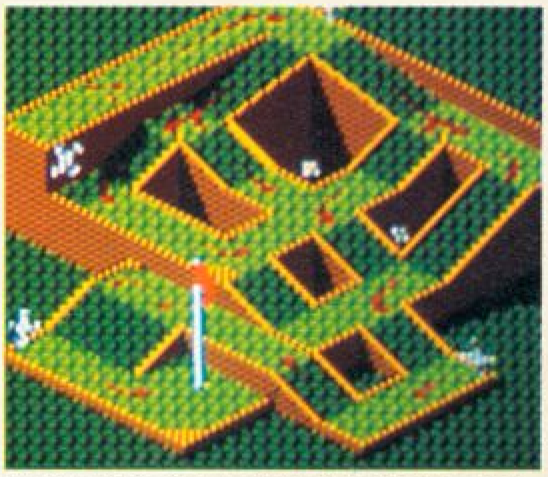
As a result, rather than being a slightly therapeutic and relaxing experience, *Zany Golf* is an irritating game, lacking long term enjoyment and only succeeding in infurtiating the player.

Zany Golf on other machines was thoroughly enjoyable because of the pleasing controls and speedy response. Since the Megadrive features neither of these, you'd have to be a real golf-nut in order to glean much enjoyment from this release.

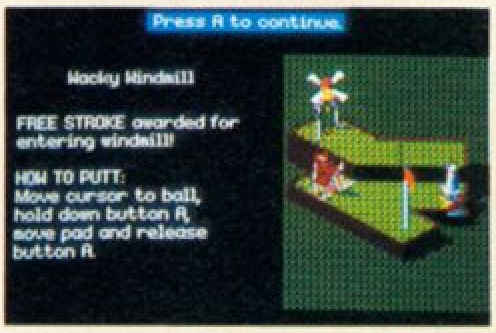
● Richard Evans



The bouncing hamburger is a tricky opponent. By tapping the control pad, you force the hamburger bounce.



Overviews of the next screen picture what antics you can look forward to. They also offer "useful" tips too.

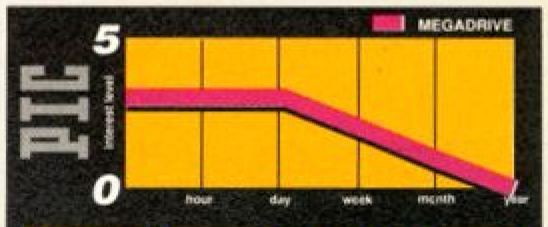


Press A to continue.

Wacky Windmill

FREE STROKE awarded for entering windmill!

HOW TO PUTT:
Move cursor to ball,
hold down button A,
move pad and release
button A.



ACE RATING
520

6	5	5	5
G	IQ	A	FF

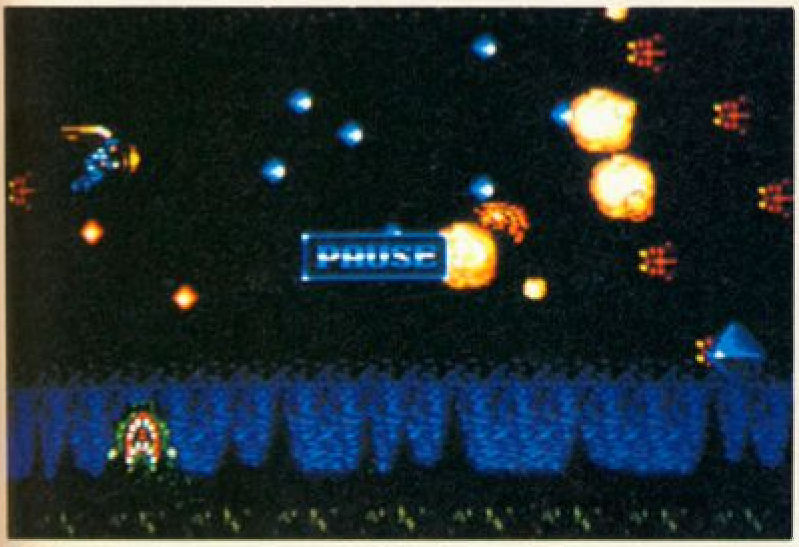
MEGADRIVE

Frustrating controls temper the excitement in the initial stages, and without much of a pull to begin with, your interest is never likely to reach the upper points on the curve. The limited number of courses mean that even with different difficulty settings, it won't hold your interest for long.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE £34.99 OUT NOW

No other versions planned



The bad guys come in enormous swarms. The feeling of enemy onslaught is pretty good.

The best part of *Gynoug* is the non-stop frenetic action. From the word go, there's a whole lot of killing to be done. Literally hundreds of aliens swarm across the screen in enormous waves of fast-moving colour. Some of these waves are really quite impressive to look at. In particular, there's an onslaught of orange flies which light up the whole screen as they whizz past. In situations like this, you do get an impression of really coming under fire. It's a nice change to feel vulnerable, even when powered-up to the max.

The powerups themselves come in two styles. You can increase your fire-rate and switch its direction with one type of pick-up and enhance your 'special weapons' potential with another.

When facing and end-of-level guardian, it's vital to be in possession of a decent power-ups, lest you perish in a ball of fire.

Speed-up characters will hasten your movement around the screen and thanks to some precise motion code, you can position your alter-ego virtually anywhere on the screen.

Gynoug is a perfectly technically respectible shoot-em-up, with a couple of nice visual additions, and with some more varied gameplay, it could have been a winner. As it stands, though, it doesn't stand as a worthy addition to anything but the most basic catalogue.

● Richard Evans

Spirit of Excalibur

Spirit of Excalibur

A blend of fantasy role-playing, adventure and combat simulation set in a richly detailed world of mountains and rivers, villages and cities, castles and ruins of Medieval England.

Knights and lords, wizards and clerics of the court of Camelot are yours to befriend and command. Interact with peasants, warriors, maidens, nobles and bandits improving their abilities and skills as you go.

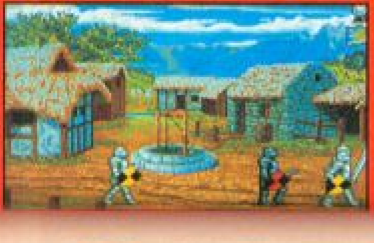
features:

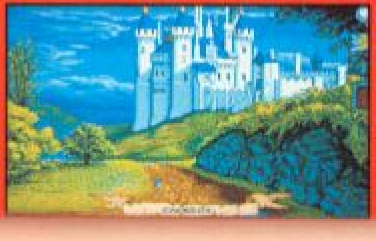
* More than 2.5 megabytes of dazzling graphics
* Powerfully orchestrated sound-track
* 16 screen scrolling map of Arthurian Britain
* Zoom from map level down to individual towns and cities
* Hundreds of hours of play-time
* PC version supports Roland MT-32, Covox, Adlib and CMS sound boards

A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER

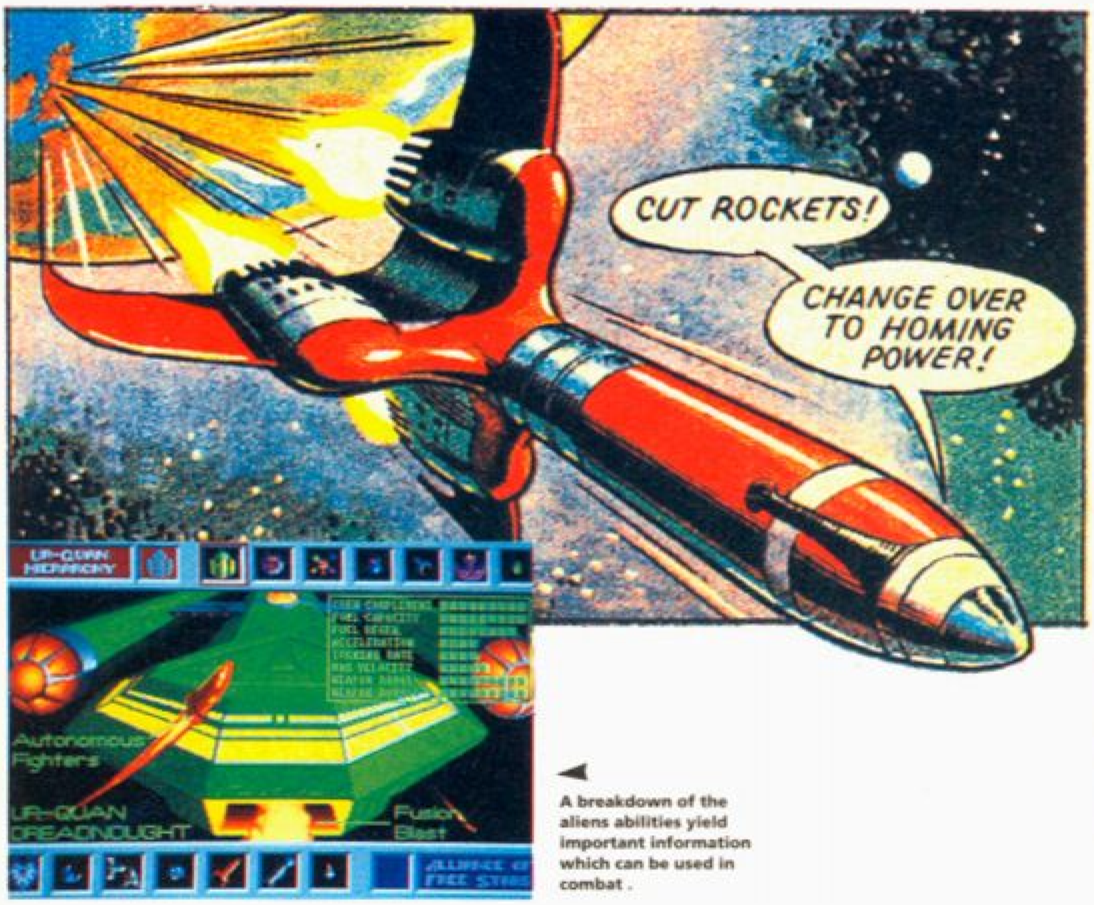
Available on:

IBM PC (VGA, MCGA, Tandy, EGA)	**£34.99**
Amiga (1 megabyte only)	**£29.99**
Atari ST (1 megabyte only)	**£29.99**

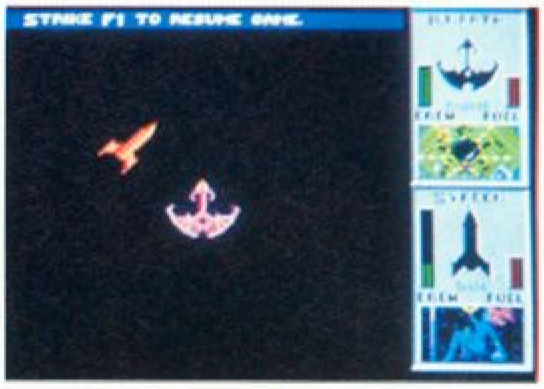




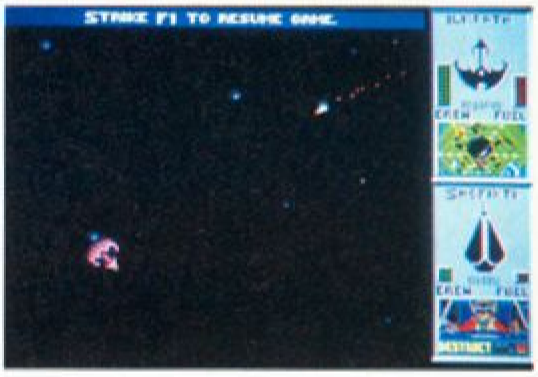
Virgin GAMES CONCEPTS IMMACULATE


CUT ROCKETS!
CHANGE OVER TO HOMING POWER!
UR-QUAN HIERARCHY
CREW COMPLEMENT
FUEL CAPACITY
FUEL REGEN.
ACCELERATION
TURNING RATE
MAX VELOCITY
WEAPON RANGE
WEAPON DAMAGE
Autonomous Fighters
UR-QUAN DREADNOUGHT
Fusion Blast
ALLIANCE OF FREE STARS

A breakdown of the aliens abilities yield important information which can be used in combat .


STRIKE F1 TO RESUME GAME.
CREW
FUEL

Once you get close to the alien during the combat sequences, you will be presented with a magnification of the action. The game plays a bit like a cross between thrust and Asteroids.


STRIKE F1 TO RESUME GAME.
CREW
FUEL
DESTRUCT

Having moved further away from the enemy craft, the view expands to encompass both ships.

STAR CONTROL

ACCOLADE put space combat/strategy games back half a decade...

After playing *Star Control* for a short while I read and re-read the manual to make sure I hadn't missed something. Why? Because I couldn't believe that the joystick I was holding was attached to an Amiga, while the game on the monitor in front of me looked like something you might expect to have seen on the C64 about five years ago.

Unfortunately further play confirmed my worst fears; *Star Control* is almost totally devoid of long-term playability, and, in places, the presentation is dire.

Although *Star Control* is described as a combat and strategy game in a space setting it should not be compared to the likes of *Elite*, *Federation Of Free Traders*, or MicroProse's recent *Lightspeed*. Those games use sophisticated 3D systems and operate in real time rather than on a move-by-move basis. *Star Control* offers tacky two-dimensional combat sequences that look as if they've been borrowed from an early Eighties coin-op, with sound effects to match. The strategy element operates in a manner similar to many wargames - each side takes turn to issue a sequence of orders.

The basic premise behind *Star Control* is that Earth and other planets in the Alliance of Free Stars are under attack by the Ur-Quan Hierarchy (a group of malign multi-syllabled and unpronounceable alien races). Rather than sit back on its overfed haunches to become part of an Ur-Quan barbeque, the Alliance gets its act together and heads out to meet the oncoming threat.

This not only involves frying the occasional Ur-Quan ship, but also building mines, fortifications, and colonies, while destroying similar alien establishments.

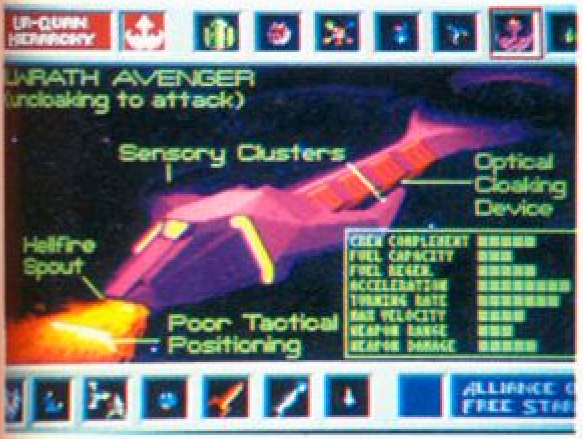
Before plunging headlong into a full game, prospective pilots are given the opportunity to practice combat using any of the available craft (each of which has its own handling characteristics and firepower). This is also an opportunity to review the capabilities of the vessels so that you know exactly what you're up against in the real thing.

If you're still not all that keen on trying your hand at the strategy game then there is a combat-only game in which you can get straight down to the business of ventilating enemy craft.

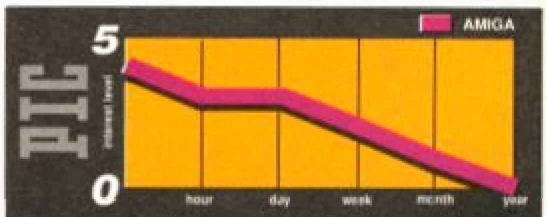
Eventually though, you won't be able to resist the temptation to try your hand at giving orders to those cute little units, all of three or four pixels across, and watch with trepidation as they zoom across the screen to meet another tiny blob of colour. To be fair, though, the minuscule graphics are almost compensated for by some very attractive 'animated re-enactments' when, as the manual puts it, 'something exciting happens'. The question is, does any games player worth his salt really want to plough through the tedium just to sample the delights of one or two animations?

On the plus side, *Star Control* comes with two editors, one to configure the keyboard, and another to modify the nine scenarios built into the game. But these are small consolation for the inevitable disappointment of many of the gamers who will part with hard-earned cash for this game.

● **Laurence Scotford**


UR-QUAN HIERARCHY
WRATH AVENGER
(uncloaking to attack)
Sensory Clusters
Optical Cloaking Device
Hellfire Spout
Poor Tactical Positioning
CREW COMPLEMENT
FUEL CAPACITY
FUEL REGEN.
ACCELERATION
TURNING RATE
MAX VELOCITY
WEAPON RANGE
WEAPON DAMAGE
ALLIANCE OF FREE STARS

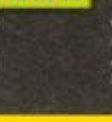
The qualites of each ship can be examine before selection. Depending on the aliens you are about to face, you can choose the optimum craft.



Glancing at the packaging and the manual *Star Control* looks like an exciting game, but your enthusiasm will begin to wane from the moment that you boot it up for the first time. Perseverance may yield some rewards, but there is little here to attract the average games player for very long.

ACE RATING

530



AMIGA

What were the development team attempting with *Star Control*? An exercise in nostalgia perhaps? Well, if so, it just hasn't worked. There will always be strategy purists that claim presentation doesn't matter in a game of this type, but that's rubbish - when you're paying this sort of money you expect to have the goods delivered in every department.

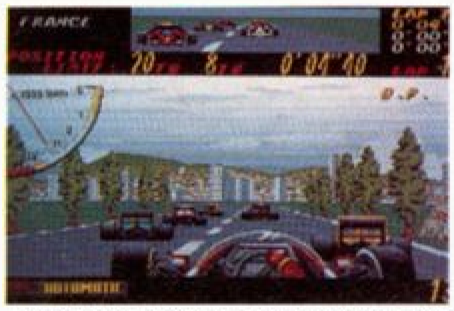
There are similar games available for the Amiga which do manage the job well, so *Star Control* has no excuses. Incidentally, you'll need an expanded Amiga to play this, and you still have to put up with lots of tedious disk accessing!

RELEASE DETAILS

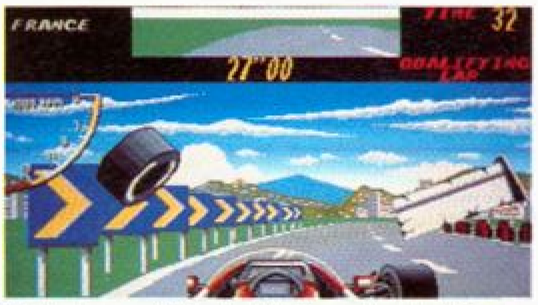
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

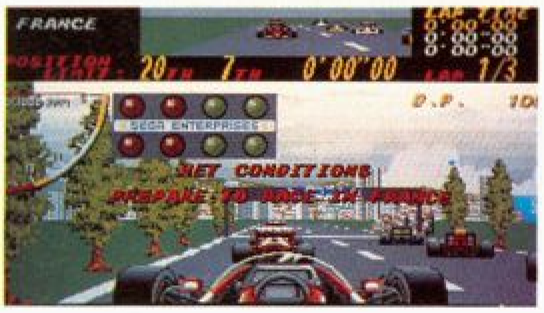
SUPER MONACO GRAND PRI



A packed road, and you can never tell where the car in front is about to move. Note the useful rear-view mirror above the main screen.



A juddering screech, the wheel slips in your hands and the car veers wildly into the trackside obstacles. Wreckage flies off the front of the car, and you realise your racing days are over.



Pull on your helmet and tackle in this Formula One challenger from US GOLD

Does the world really need another Formula One road racing game? With titles like *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*, probably the best 16-bit racer available at the moment, you would think it would be difficult to come up with anything even slightly better.

Super Monaco Grand Prix can't be accused of not trying. From the graphics to the sound, the speed of animation and the intro screens, it's high quality throughout; whether you think it takes pole position must be very much a matter of personal taste.

Based on the Sega coin-op, the game opens with a bouncy theme tune and a welcoming young lady in a tight swimming costume, followed by a nicely digitised pic of your racer, a page of engine specifications (very useful) and a course map.

Before racing you have a choice of joystick or mouse control; you can set the mouse sensitivity by moving it to its far left position, holding down the left button, sliding it to the far right position and releasing. I found the game pretty easy to control in either mouse or joystick mode; control is logical (left, right, forward to accelerate, click/fire to change gear), and response is fast and accurate.

There are also three gear change modes; automatic four-gear, manual four-gear, and the most challenging and authentic, manual seven-gear. You get more engine power in the more difficult modes.

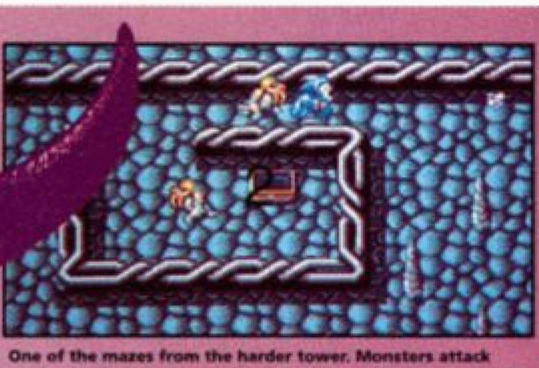
The main display features a rear-view mirror at the top, together with the name of the current course (of which there are sixteen). The main area shows the usual cockpit-view with the front half of your car, your arms and the steering wheel. At the top right is the RPM counter, but *rather than concentrating on that you can judge* your revs from the engine sound. There are also various lap counter and lap time position displays.

You have to complete a qualifying lap on the preliminary course before entering the competition proper; there's a time limit outside of which you won't qualify at all, but you will get the conso lation of having another lady in an even tighter swimming costume informing you of your failure.

Once you have completed a qualifying lap and taken your position on the starting grid, the competition hots up. *Scrolling is pretty smooth and* plenty fast, background and roadside details are large and well-detailed, and the other cars are well depicted.

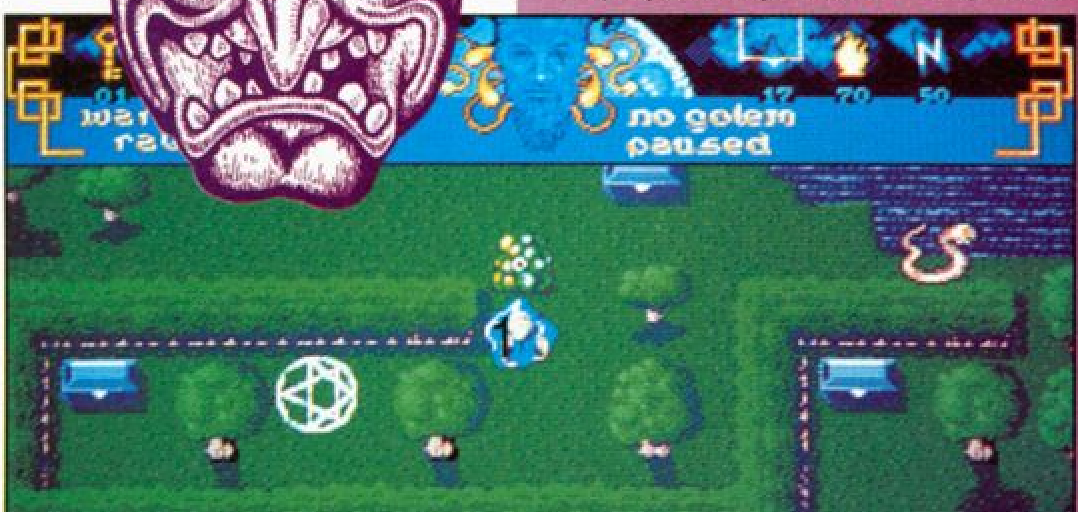
Actual performance is very realistic; you can bash and smash your way to some extent - even scrape along the roadside barriers - but any major impact and you'll find bits of your car flying in all directions, and your Grand Prix career coming to a sticky end.

Your performance, of course, is expected to improve as you progress from one track to the next; for France you have to qualify 7th or higher



One of the mazes from the harder tower. Monsters attack more quickly and viciously, and there are more traps to avoid.

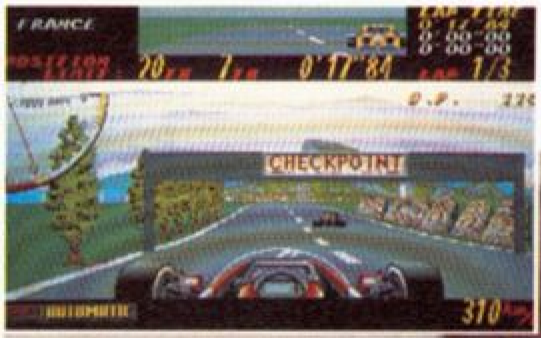
warlock rating
no golem



Reading through the background to *Warlock the Avenger* is captivating enough; you are plunged into the magical world of Belorn, where the lone hero Saran's battle against the evil wizard Acamantor ended in ultimate defeat. But help is at hand, in the form of an ancient warlock who vows to enter Acamantor's tower, defeat the four demon guardians and finally ice Acamantor.

But once you get past the pretty loading screen and sinister atmospheric music, you realise this is a "tribute" to *Druid*.

Druid, an ancient 8-bit title, was quite well-received in its day; but apart from improving the graphics and sound, *Warlock the Avenger* adds very little to the original concept. Basically it's a cross between *Gauntlet* and *Pacman*, as you steer the Warlock around a series of mystical mazes, fighting off monsters and searching out the entrances to later levels.

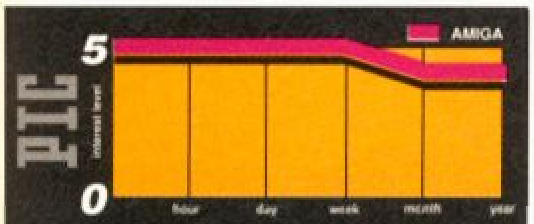


MONEYTRON
37

for Brazil 5th or higher, and so on up to the final in Monaco. To add a small random element to the game, there's a small chance that any given track will be wet, which makes driving much more hazardous.

The best that can be said of *Super Monaco GP* is that it's a good all-rounder; sound effects are well integrated with the action, there's little unnecessary flash and the racing sequences are fast and accurate. It's well up with leaders.

● Chris Jenkins



An excellent coin-op conversion which can't be faulted in any serious way. Graphic design is well up to standard, animation is fast and pretty smooth, control is realistic and sound effects are well-integrated.

ACE RATING
871

8	8	8	8
G	IQ	A	FF

AMIGA

Slick graphics and sound, a good impression of speed and a real driving feel. Added to entertaining intro screens and a genuine sense of challenge, the total is a fine piece of programming.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	TBA	November
AMSTRAD	£10.99/£15.99	OUT NOW
C64	£10.99/£15.99	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£10.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

WARLOCK THE AVENGER

Go back in time with MILLENIUM's magical arcade adventure, which might stir horrible memories...

The mazes, shown in a form of pseudo 3D, are colourfully-designed but repetitive, scrolling smoothly as your warlock toddles around. Various monsters such as ghosts, beetles, skeletons, snakes, devils, wraiths and "ralacks" (which look like piles of blancmange) shuffle towards you, and you will soon become sincerely fed up with shooting them.

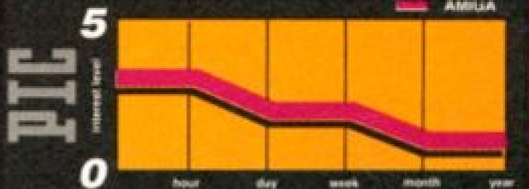
Around the maze are dotted chests which the warlock can open simply by standing in front of them. The chest screen shows you a pretty graphic of the contents, and you can choose from a number of spells found inside; water spells, fire spells, lightning bolts, and so on. These can be used against the monsters of the maze, the stronger monsters needing several shots to destroy them.

Rarely, you will find more potent spells such as Golem, which creates for you an impervious clone which follows and defends you; and Chaos, which is needed to see of the guardian demons.

The warlock's constitution is shown on an energy bar, and is depleted by contact with monsters, water, or poisonous tiles. Standing on Pentagrams of Life or Energy Carpets will replenish your energy.

Now, all this would be fine if we were talking about an 8-bit game, or even a budget 16-bit game. But this is an aged 8-bit game masquerading as a full-price16-bit title, and very little effort has been made to get it up to standard. As far as I'm concerned the land of Belorn can go hang - Acamantor's welcome to it.

● Chris Jenkins



Apart from some atmospheric music and sound effects, decent static graphics and smooth scrolling, *Warlock* doesn't really offer anything you couldn't find in an 8-bit game. Basically it's a slightly tarted-up version of a real old wrinkly.

ACE RATING
568

5	5	5	5
G	IQ	A	FF

AMIGA

An excellent loading screen and superb atmospheric music lead you to expect something much better, the game itself is not what you expect of a full-price Amiga title nowadays.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£TBA	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£TBA	OUT NOW
C64	£TBA	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

MiG-29™

FULCRUM

The Soviet Union has produced the finest air superiority fighter in the World.
Now Domark give you the thrill of flying the formidable MiG-29 Fulcrum on your computer.
Prove your skills in a series of gruelling missions based on real life scenarios.
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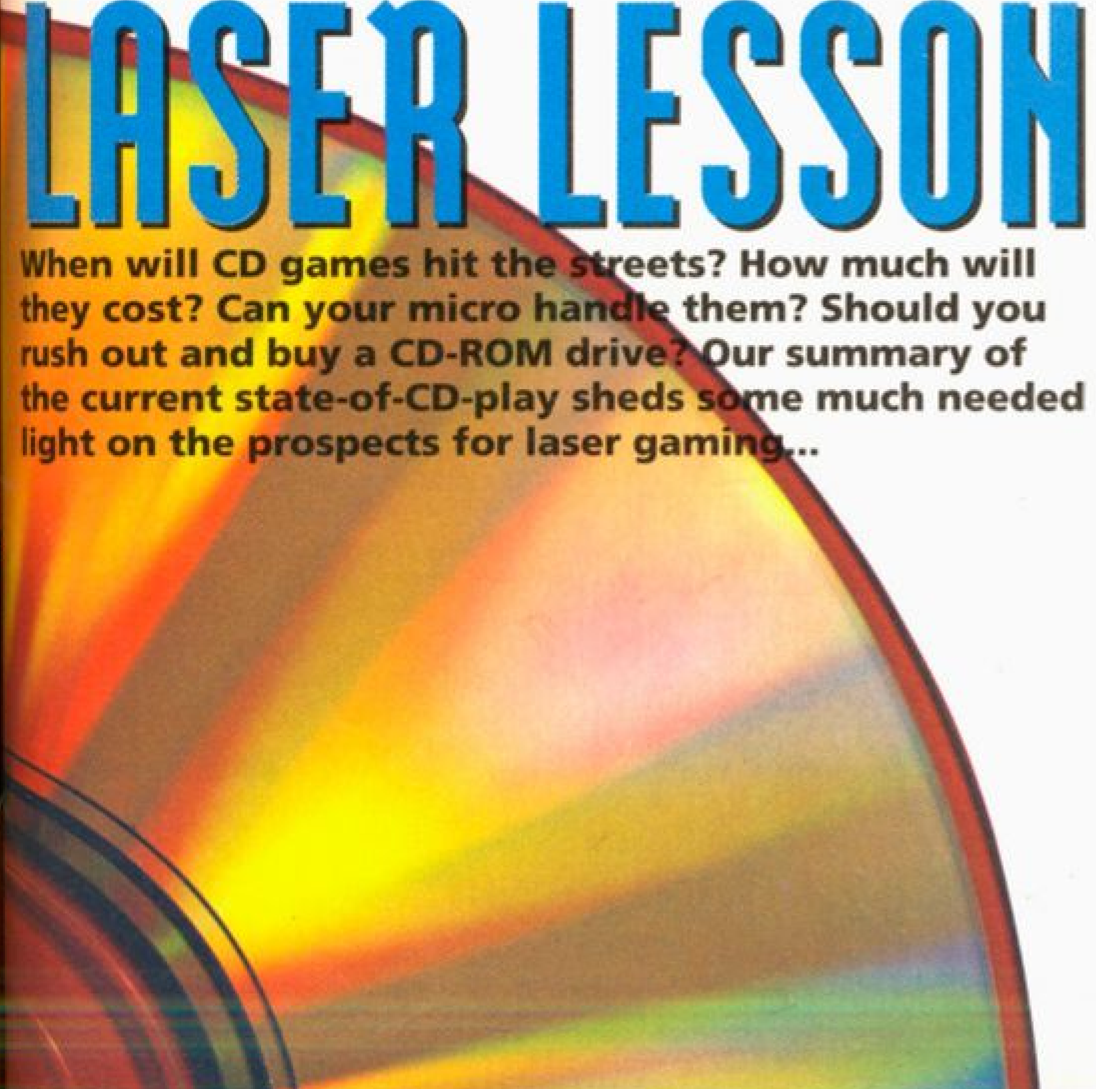
Published by Domark Software Ltd., Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR. Tel: (081)-780 2224.
Available on: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25". Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC screenshots.

LASER LESSON

When will CD games hit the streets? How much will they cost? Can your micro handle them? Should you rush out and buy a CD-ROM drive? Our summary of the current state-of-CD-play sheds some much needed light on the prospects for laser gaming...



Everyone agrees that CD-ROM is going to dominate the games business in the next couple of years. But that's all everyone agrees on. To understand how and why CD-ROM is likely to affect your gaming you need to know not only what technical issues are involved, but also how these issues are being addressed by the hardware and software manufacturers. We've summed up the latest state of CD play for each major machine and answered some of the most frequently-asked questions about CD-ROM technology.

Read this and join the experts – most of whom will know even less about CD-ROM than you did before you started reading.

AMIGA

Amiga owners, as most people are aware, could find themselves leading the CD revolution following Commodore's development of CDTV, full details of which were printed in ACE 34. CDTV is basically an Amiga with a CD-ROM attached, together with some firmware that offers CD-audio control and CD-ROM management.

CDTV, despite earlier reports, does not interleave data (see the Q&A panel) and does not provide any data decompression as CD-ROM XA and DVI do. This means that you can't have yer actual interactive movies, chum, but you do get greatly enhanced audio and, on the face of it, a more powerful unit than CDI currently promises to be (although Philips claim CDI will feature full-screen, full-motion video when it is finally released).

It would be a great mistake to underestimate the impact of CD-quality audio (especially human speech) and increased data storage for games and entertainment. In particular, expect to see some impressive *Cosmic Osmo*-type software on CDTV, not to mention numerous hefty educational packages and fantasy adventures. Arcade fans will also get the sound effects and number of levels they've always wanted.

Existing Amiga owners can upgrade using the CD Drive unit offered by Commodore, but expect to pay around £350, though the price has not yet been officially fixed (and neither has the launch date).

ATARI ST

Atari were one of the first companies to flirt with CD-ROM, promising ST owners an official CD-ROM upgrade that never materialised. It would be very surprising if Atari did not provide this in the very near future and, following the price reduction on the STE, an Atari CD system could be good value for money, providing that the company developed a firmware cradle for the whole system *a la* CDTV.

You could, in theory, attach any standard CD-ROM drive to an ST, but the benefits of doing so would be negligible since there is no (to our knowledge) ST CD-ROM software. ST owners, for the moment, must play the waiting game...

PC AND COMPATIBLES

Of all machine owners, PC buffs are already in a position to go CD. There is a wealth of PC CD-ROM software, though the number of different hardware configurations may create incompatibility problems in some cases.

In the States, both Tandy and Headstart produce CD-ROM PC's and, most significantly, there are signs that IBM themselves are about to produce a low-end CD-ROM system – possibly built around the Fujitsu FM Towns (see the entry on the Towns itself).

Sierra, who incidentally pioneered EGA graphics games, are heavily promoting CD-ROM and other games manufacturers are beginning to follow suit. Sierra CD titles represent a significant improvement over their floppy disk counterparts and the company are planning to launch their own CD-ROM upgrade kit at price of around £400, including several free software packages. According to the recently established Sierra UK office, this upgrade will be offered in the UK as soon as it is available in the States, which should happen later this year. This could be a bargain.

PC owners with money in their pockets will also soon be able to benefit from DVI technology (see Q&A panel), since this was developed by Intel and is geared to PC systems.

FUJITSU FM TOWNS

This expensive Japanese machine would not normally merit a mention here but for a recent announcement of a joint venture between Intel and Fujitsu that has prompted widespread speculation that the Towns may form the core of a new low-end IBM home-CD system.

This is not as silly as it sounds because the Towns already has a reasonable degree of PC compatibility. Despite having a low user base in Japan of around 80,000 machines, the Towns has a high profile because of its powerful graphics modes. It has also attracted a huge range of Western developers, producing exotic CD versions of games ranging from *Dungeon Master* to *AfterBurner*, because the machine offered a cost-effective way of gaining CD-ROM development experience.

Ironically, the weakest link in the Towns system is probably the CD itself. Early versions had a truly appalling transfer rate of around 35K a second, which, together with a rather clunky OS, could mean waiting eons for games to load. More recent models are much sprightlier, but the Towns remains a flawed machine, despite its attractive styling and excellent displays.

8-BIT MACHINES

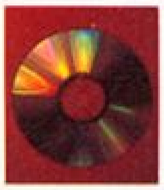
There are currently no plans to develop CD software for any of the 8-bit machines. Looking on the bright side, if you're still hanging on to your C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, or Oric Atmos, the advent of a good CD system could be the first major increase in games functionality since the Amiga and provide the incentive you've been waiting for to upgrade. You won't be disappointed.

ON YOUR CONSOLE?

Although there is absolutely no comparison between CD and cartridge in data retrieval performance terms, there is also no comparison between them in terms of manufacturing cost – CD wins the latter hands down. Not surprising then, that console manufacturers are very keen on CD technology.

There is no CD set-up for the NES system (or for any of the other 8-bit consoles, with the exception of the 8/16 bit PC Engine). However, we have very high expectations of the Super Famicom's potential in this area.

That's because Sony and Nintendo have already announced that they are jointly developing a CD unit for the Super Famicom, for launch later this year in Japan at a price of under £400. Supported by the two giants in the games and CD fields respectively, this unit could have awe-



some powers. Unfortunately, there is already one very fat bug in the lettuce. The Sony/Nintendo unit is reported to be incompatible with CD-audio. If this turns out to be the case then these companies will be delivering a terrible blow to the consumer purely for the sake of greed – by producing a proprietary CD system, they will maintain control over publication, development, and profit. So once again the consumer loses out. Hooray.

The PC Engine already has a dedicated CD-ROM unit and a good deal of software on CD. To date, most of this software has simply used CD as an alternative publishing medium to save cartridge costs, but recently some titles have been producing excellent results as companies outside the console market begin to develop for the NEC machine in order to gain CD-ROM experience. The best example of this is a recent adventure by Icom, featuring Sherlock Holmes and boasting a very impressive full-animation window. Check out the review in ACE next month.

Despite constant rumours about an impending dedicated CD-ROM drive for the Sega Megadrive, no such unit has appeared. We were unable to contact the UK distributors for news about this so Megadrive owners, like ST owners, will have to wait. That there will be such a unit at some stage seems almost 100% certain, however.

CD Q&A

What with all the rattle and hum surrounding CD technology, it's hard to keep track of what's going on. Here are some frequently asked questions about the systems that are going to change the face of gaming...

● *What is a CD-ROM?*

Simple. It's a 12cm disk that exactly resembles an audio-CD disk in appearance, although for protection it is usually encased in a plastic cartridge. To use the disk, you insert the whole cartridge assembly into the player. With a music CD, a couple of glitches caused by marks on the disk are hardly likely to be noticed – but with data even a single error could be fatal, hence the added protection of the transport cartridge.

The storage of data on a CD-ROM is governed by standards laid down by Microsoft. The system is now fairly ancient and was originally designed as an extension of the functionality of audio CD's. For this reason, CD-ROM is rather inefficient when it comes to data usage. A standard CD-ROM drive has a data transfer rate (i.e. the speed at which it can send bytes along the cable) of around 150K a second, considerably slower than most hard disks, the fastest of which can manage around 1Mbyte a second.

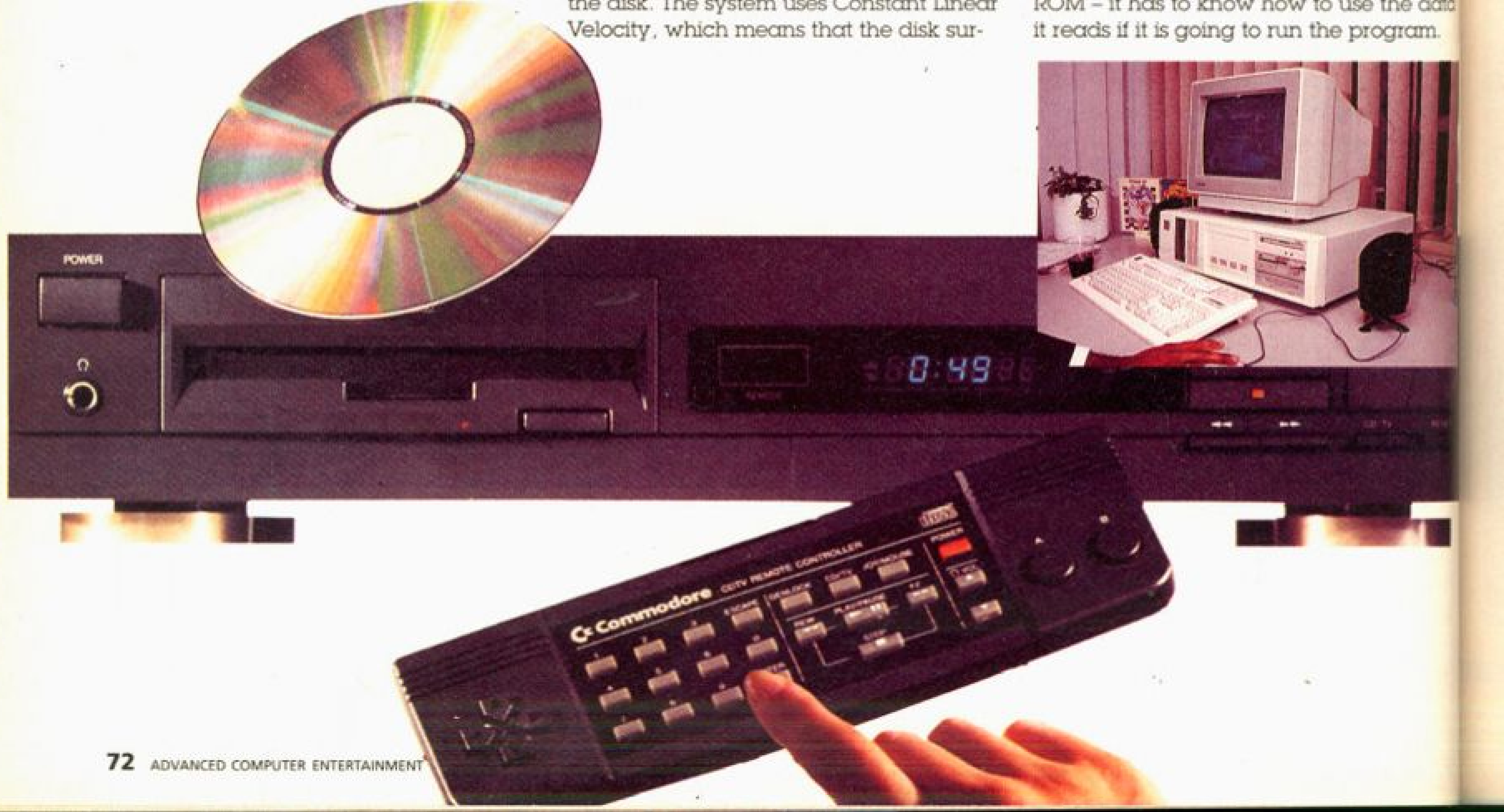
Equally annoying is the fashion in which CD-ROM actually gets the data off the disk. The system uses Constant Linear Velocity, which means that the disk surface beneath the laser must always be moving at the same speed. Unfortunately, as any fule kno, the tracks towards the centre of the disk have a smaller circumference than those at the outer edge. The ungainly solution involves constantly altering the rate of spin of the disk.

As a result, CD-ROM is not only slow at transferring data, it is also slow at locating it (the 'access time'). Old hands may remember the early laserdisk video games like *Dragon's Lair* which had disconcerting black-outs between scenes as the system desperately tried to locate the next batch of data.

In fact, CD-ROM is pretty useless for most games applications – except for the fact that it can hold 550Mbytes of data, i difficult to pirate, offers CD-audio quality sound for some applications and, in pence-per-K, is an extremely cheap storage medium. With the current absence o any competing optical-disk standard, these advantages make CD-ROM an almost certain victor in the games data-storage wars.

● *If CD-ROM is a standard, does this mean that a CD-ROM for the Amiga will work on the ST with a CD-ROM attached?*

Possibly – it depends what's on the disk. There's a standard called ISO9660 which determines the physical file structure of CD-ROM. This means that CD-ROM's conforming to ISO9660 may be read by any ISO9660 drive. It is conceivable, therefore that clever developers could use the massive capacity of CD-ROM to store executable code and graphics for more than one computer system on a single disk. Remember, it doesn't mean much if your computer can read the data on a CD-ROM – it has to know how to use the data it reads if it is going to run the program.



Commodore's CDTV, first revealed exclusively in ACE last year, is set to be come the world's first dedicated multimedia hardware platform when it launches in the UK this summer. The machine conforms to the ISO9660 standard (see Q&A) and has full CD-audio control facilities. Although it cannot interleave audio and graphics data, the machine's Amiga sound chip gives CDTV a powerful audio performance potential. *(Inset photo)* A CD-ROM PC system running in Sierra's UK office, where the company announced their intention to offer CD-ROM hardware to their customers this year 'for under $800'. Sierra also demonstrated their impressive 'Mother Goose' exploration game, featuring superlative Cosmic Osmo-style gameplay with full colour, excellent graphics, and CD-quality sound

PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS DOG!

The Fujitsu FM Towns' compact design is not just designer whimsy: the machine was developed with Japanese sitting rooms in mind, and when you've seen one of those you'll understand the need for a compact machine. Although the Towns has only sold in comparatively small numbers, it enjoys a very high prestige amongst Japanese gamesters

● *How much will CD-ROM games cost?*

There is no reason why CD-ROM games should cost any more than games stored using conventional floppies. In fact, where the floppy version required numerous disks, the single CD should save the manufacturer (and hence possibly the consumer) money. The most likely scenario, however, is that developers will use the storage capacity for additional game features, the programming and design of which will cost more money and hence add to the final price of the product.

● *Can I play my audio CD's in my CD-ROM drive?*

Almost all CD-ROM systems include some facility for playing music CD's. This ranges from a simple headphone socket to, on the CDTV for example, a complex CD-audio management interface built into ROM and enabling you to use your computer as a sophisticated CD-audio player.

● *What is CD-I?*

CD-I stands for Compact Disk Interactive and is a standard developed jointly by Philips and Sony. Originally announced in 1985, it has been consistently delayed. The system uses a CD for data storage and additional computer graphics and sound hardware to provide a single unit dedicated to the interactive manipulation of CD data. Unfortunately the sound and graphics hardware is not exactly state of the art and release dates for the system are still extremely unclear.

● *What is DVI?*

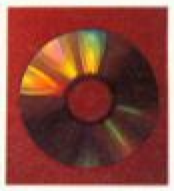
DVI is a hardware device developed by chip makers Intel and designed to work in conjunction with CD-ROM systems. Its objective is to overcome the limitations of CD-ROM, particularly with regard to the data transfer rate (see above). The basic principle of DVI is data compression – the system decompresses data taken from the CD in real time and by effectively increasing the amount of information being spooled from the disk enables more data intensive operations to be carried out by the computer. The most obvious application for this technology is full-motion, full-screen video – movies on your micro, in other words. Using DVI, a CD-ROM can store around 70 minutes of full motion video data.

● *If CD-ROM is simply a disk for storing data, what's all the fuss about?*

The fuss is about two things. The first is that having huge amounts of data makes computer applications that were hitherto impossible now theoretically achievable. The most notable one is 'interactive movies', or full-motion, full-screen video displays on your home computer; the most practical one is CD-audio-quality sound for games. Making the optimum use of CD-ROM's storage, however, involves a lot of new technology (for speeding up the access rate, for example, as in DVI or CD-ROM XA – see elsewhere in this panel).

The big questions, therefore, are not over CD-ROM but over how it will be used. Is the CDTV package really the answer? Will CD-I ever appear? Will DVI ever become cheap enough to be implemented on home computers? Questions like these are important because no-one really doubts that the advantages offered by CD technology are vital to new technology.

There's also the problem of actually developing for CD-ROM. Although it's just a disk like any other, using the system poses special problems for developers. Not only is there more space that tempts one to develop more expensive games, but the way the space is used can be crucial to an application's success. 'Disk geography', as it is called, is important because of CD-ROM's terrible data access performance (see *What is a CD-ROM?* above). Supposing you open a chest in a dungeon and the program needs to locate the sprite data for the hideous zombie that springs out of it. It's going to be a bit of a let-down if the whole game hangs up while the laser tootles off across the disk looking for the relevant data – the answer is to ensure that all related data is stored in a readily accessible, nearby location. This may well involve duplication of data across the disk to ensure speedy access.



Writing games that can exploit CD-ROM's potential to the full and, at the same time, bypass its shortcomings is a challenging business. The rewards tomorrow will be high, but the uncertainties today are enormous.

● *If CD-ROM can store CD-audio music, can I listen to it and play games at the same time using the same disk?*

It depends on the system you've got. Once again, the problem is data transfer rates. CD-ROM can't shovel out the data fast enough to supply data for your application at the same time as dishing out CD-audio sound.

The solution is called 'data interleaving' and is the main feature of CD-ROM-XA, an enhanced CD-ROM standard developed by Sony but currently not very widely implemented. What happens is this: the laser grabs 16 bits at a time and sends them to the computer. Normally, this information would be either audio, graphics, or control data, but you can mingle your data types so that those 16 bits actually hold encoded information for both audio and video.

In CD-ROM XA, the system includes a Digital Signal Processor that strips off the first bit (or more than the first bit, depending on the sound quality you require) of every sixteen received from the CD-ROM and applies decompression algorithms to the data received as a result. Sound and graphics data can therefore be accessed simultaneously.

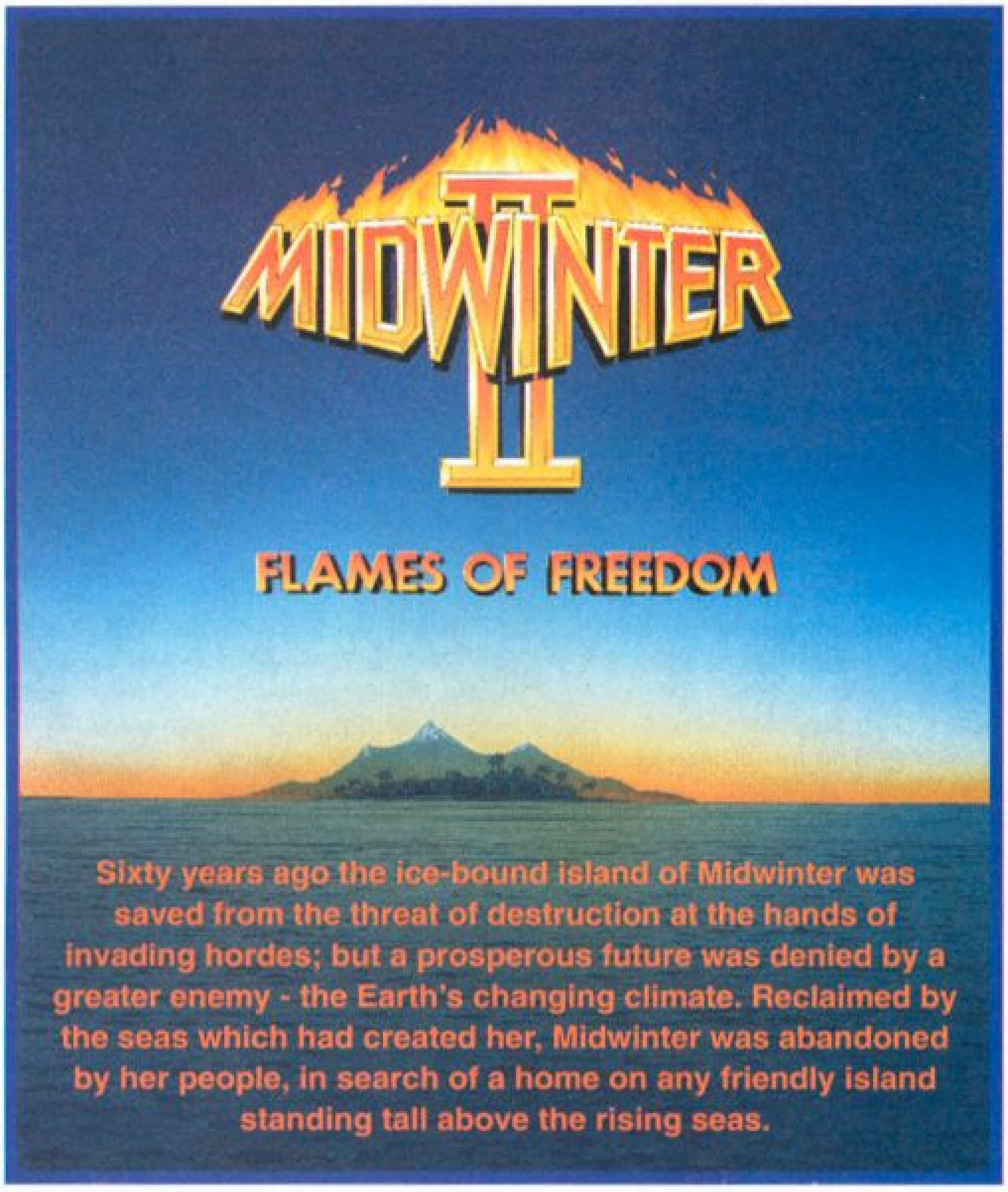
Unfortunately, CDTV does not feature interleaving and neither do most of the CD-ROM systems currently on offer. It should, however, be a standard feature of most systems within a year or two.

● *What CD-ROM system should I be thinking of buying?*

That's an impossible question to answer at present. Check out the notes for you machine elsewhere in this article. CD-ROM is the future, but at present it looks like staying in the future for a few months yet.

● Steve Cook

FLAMES OF R



Sixty years ago the ice-bound island of Midwinter was saved from the threat of destruction at the hands of invading hordes; but a prosperous future was denied by a greater enemy - the Earth's changing climate. Reclaimed by the seas which had created her, Midwinter was abandoned by her people, in search of a home on any friendly island standing tall above the rising seas.

"In the more temperate equatorial reaches of the Atlantic, only one of forty-two islands held out a hand, welcoming the survivors into the Atlantic Federation, a force for peace, prosperity and democracy. But the new home is threatened by the evil Saharan Empire, a mighty military dictatorship based on the African mainland, already enslaving the other island communities, and ultimately intent on conflict with the Federation.

The enslaved islands are home to freedom fighters looking to break free from Saharan domination and join the Federation. The mammoth task facing the Federation is to covertly aid the liberation of as many islands as possible before the Saharan Empire makes its final push for Atlantic domination. The Flames of Freedom must be lit. The torch is about to be passed to you."

ATARI ST
SCREENSHOTS

Push your body and your wits for hours on end against the most amazing, exciting and adv

FREEDOM

As the best Field Agent the Atlantic Federation has, you are charged with the execution of highly dangerous clandestine missions on each of the forty-one islands. Each island has its own political, administrative and cultural perspective, so each mission will require different aspects of your chosen physical, mental and psychological skills.

RESTRICTED

MISSION BRIEFING - BENI MAZAR

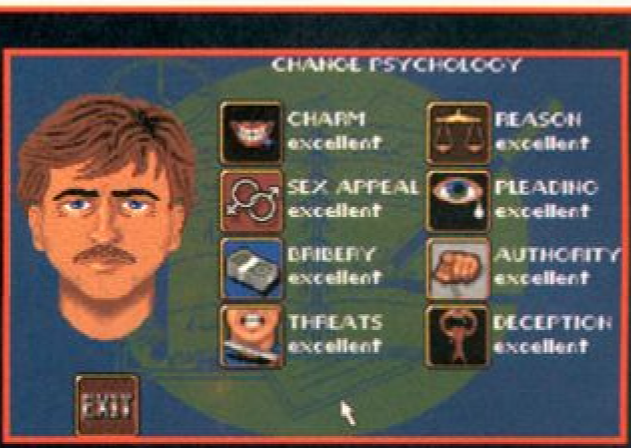
Your first mission objective is to sabotage a Power Station, You'll need to think through the entire process for yourself:- steal explosives from a local army base; find the engineer who designed the station; rescue his daughter to persuade him to give you the plans; hijack a vehicle for use; dodge or kill the sentrys; plant the explosives, and finally escape unseen.

In every mission,you are on your own, but not without help. There are 4000 individuals with which you may interact, including friends, foes, and foes pretending to be friends. Every character has their own looks, personality and life history to assess. You have twenty-four modes of transport available to you, across land, through the air and both across and through the seas. You have over a quarter of a million square miles to cover, all mapped using Maelstrom's unique 3-D light sourced fractal landscapes, and thousands of buildings to explore.

Flames of Freedom provides you with a magnificent strategic challenge, fought according to your strengths, weaknesses and abilities, and visualised via graphics sequences even more stunning than those of its predecessor - with Midwinter II, a new age dawns

Flames of Freedom will be available soon for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC Compatible, from Rainbird, the Masters of Strategy.

dventu strategy game. Midwinter II, This time its personal !



CHANGE PSYCHOLOGY

CHARM excellent

REASON excellent

SEX APPEAL excellent

PLEADING excellent

BRIBERY excellent

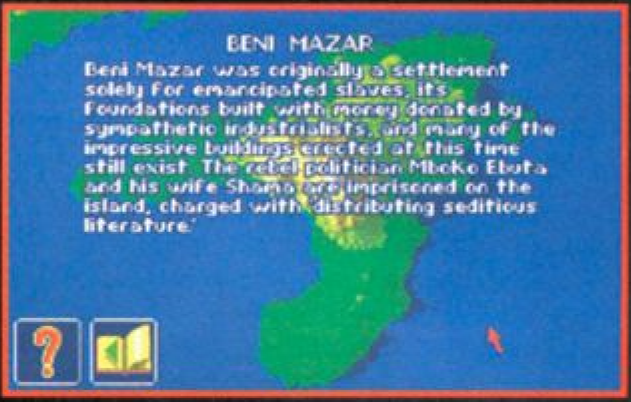
AUTHORITY excellent

THREATS excellent

DECEPTION excellent

★ Sophisticated character profile generators allow you to choose your own looks, sex, psychology and physical characteristics.

★ Choose to use Training mode to practice any aspect of the game, 'Firefight' to try one complete mission, or 'Campaign' to tackle the whole shooting match !



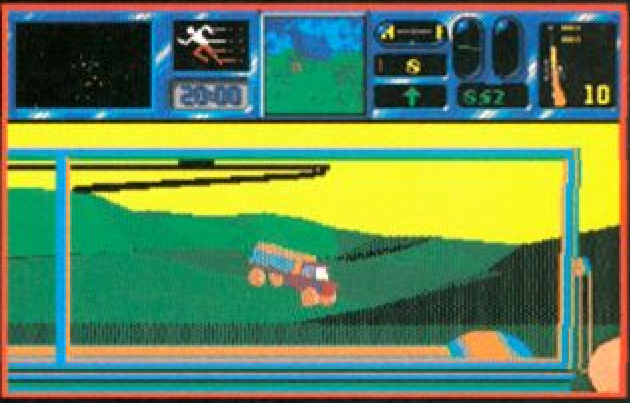
BENI MAZAR

Beni Mazar was originally a settlement solely for emancipated slaves, its foundations built with money donated by sympathetic industrialists, and many of the impressive buildings erected at this time still exist. The rebel politician Mboko Ebuta and his wife Shama are imprisoned on the island, charged with distributing seditious literature.'

★ Cover a quarter of a million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by light-sourced fractal techniques.

★ Auto-route options allow you to plan and execute travel within the 3-D automatically.

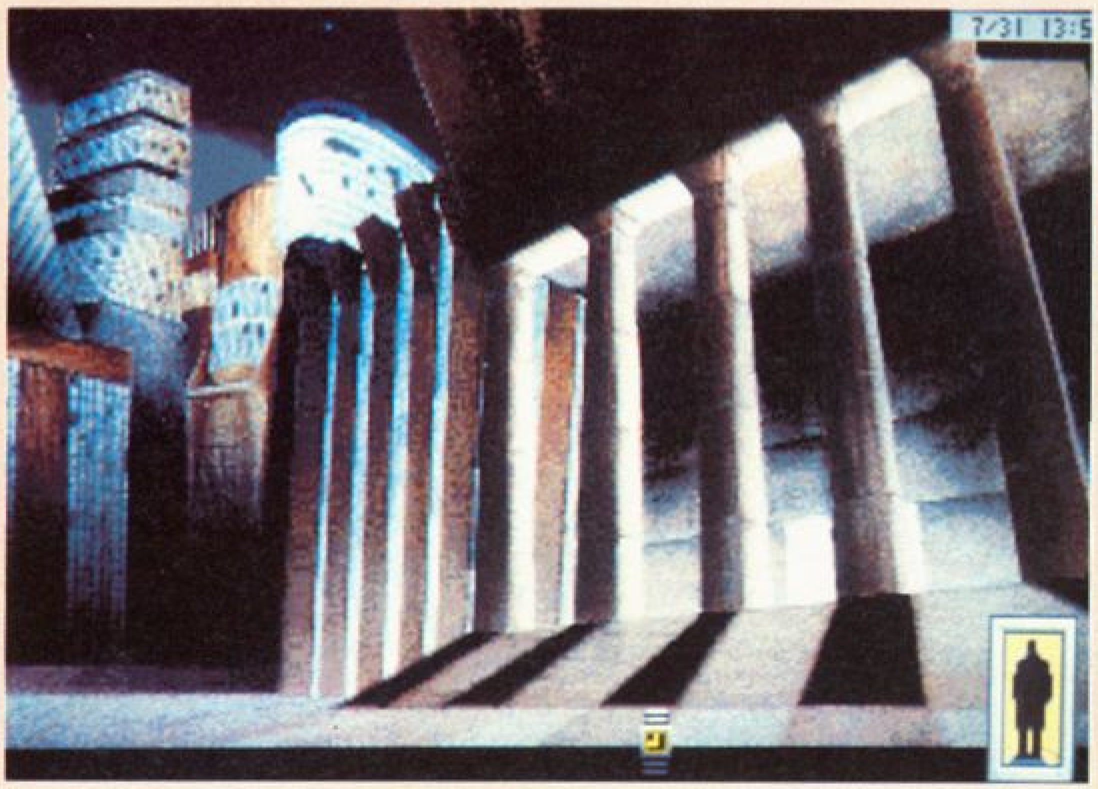
★ Interact with 4000 characters, each with an individual personal profile.

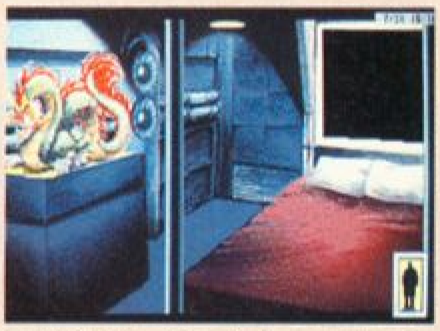


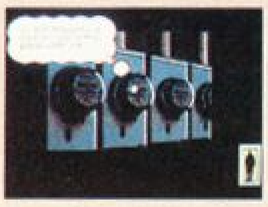
★ Utilise 24 modes of transport, across land, skies and seas.

★ Fight with 12 different weapons against a massive array of opposing firepower.

★ Use your investigative and deductive techniques to solve endless challenges to aid your progress.




Could this Chinese dragon be the cunning key to more Machiavellian hidden secrets?


Hmmm, these switches could well come in handy later on...

TNT Tricks 'n' Tactics

***Rise of the Dragon, Captive, Night Shift, Supremacy* and *F19 Stealth Fighter* are just a few of the games blasted wide open in this month's tips and cheats selection**

Rise of the Dragon

Sierra's *Rise of the Dragon* is proving most popular with our PC readers. And since we can't help playing it to death in the office, we thought it only fair to impart the information we've gleaned. Be warned, your enjoyment of the game may be seriously depleted by reading any further!

From The Top:

Once you've woken up, pick up your clothes and put them on, then take your coat and wear it. Move the pillow on the bed to reveal your gun, but don't take it. Turn on the vidphone and read the messages using the remote control. Remove the picture of Chandi from the slot, and remove your ID card too. Leave your apartment and go down in the elevator to the Em-Way.

Take the Em-way to City Hall and go to the Bureau of Records. Time to patch things up with Karen. Talk to her and apologise for standing her up. Once you've got the keys from her, head back to your apartment and use them to open the cabinet above the sink. Take the bombs, the Fisto bar and the wire-testing kit.

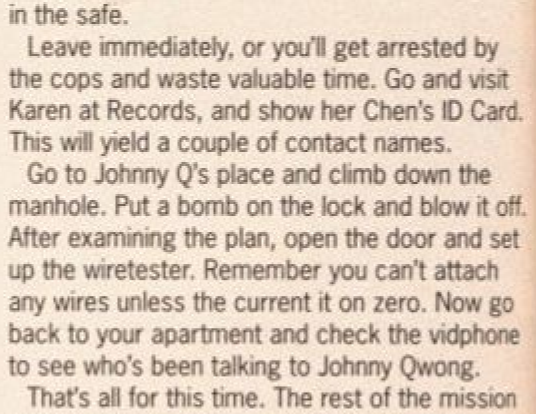
Leave your apartment and go to the Pleasure Dome on the Em-way. Enter the Em-Way (if you haven't got a gun, you'll be okay). Head straight for the Bar and talk to the black guy at the far end. Tell him you want to talk to him about one of his friends, then tell him it's Chandi. Then tell him thay he's got lots of friends minus one. Show him the picture of Chandi from the vid-fax. He will break down and confess that he is The Jake. He'll tell you that Chandi was running with some drug-dealers, ask him who and if he becomes tight-lipped remind him that Chandi was one of his friends and she wouldn't want him to protect whoever killed her.

Once you've got the name of Chen Lu from The Jake, leave him alone. Go back to the Em-way and visit Chen Lu's place. Enter Chen's apartment and once you've looked at his messages and removed his id card, go into the bedroom. Press the eye of the Dragon statue and you'll reveal a safe. Type in the combination (it's part of Chen's vid-phone number). Get everything in the safe.

Leave immediately, or you'll get arrested by the cops and waste valuable time. Go and visit Karen at Records, and show her Chen's ID Card. This will yield a couple of contact names.

Go to Johnny Q's place and climb down the manhole. Put a bomb on the lock and blow it off. After examining the plan, open the door and set up the wiretester. Remember you can't attach any wires unless the current it on zero. Now go back to your apartment and check the vidphone to see who's been talking to Johnny Qwong.

That's all for this time. The rest of the mission is up to you. Unless you can wait until next month!

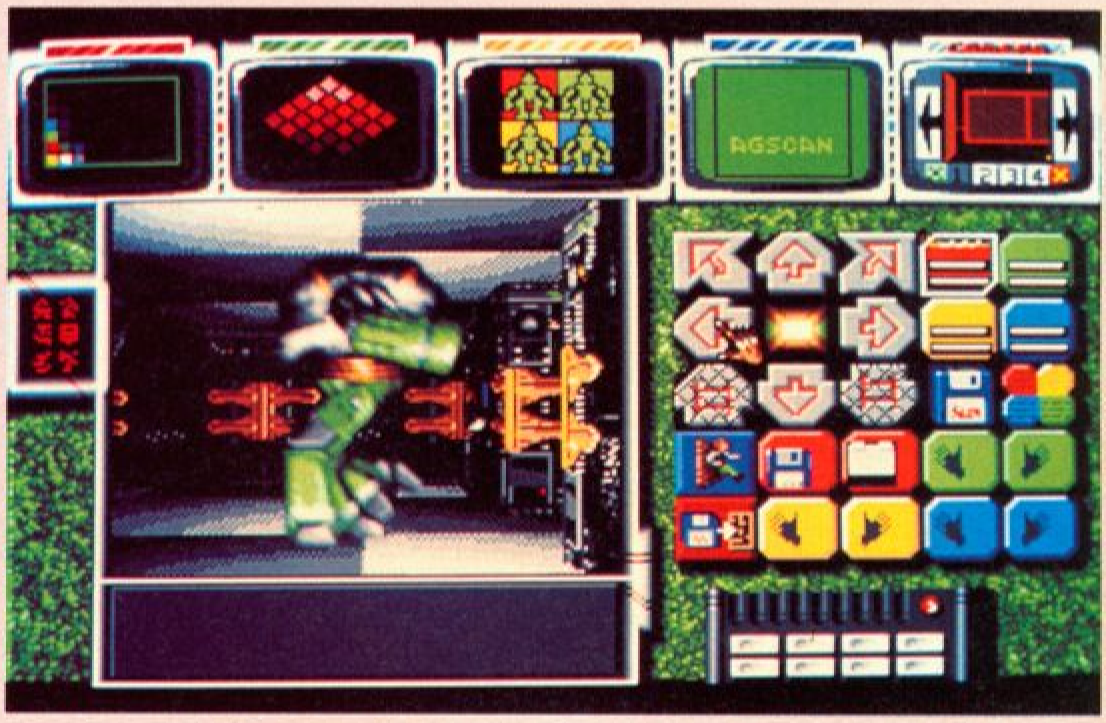

KAREN

What in the hell are you doing here, Blade?!

Karen's not looking to happy. Time to kiss and make up.

Captive

This excellent graphic adventure has been keeping many readers awake long into the small hours of the night. ACE has already printed a set of general tips, but it seems these weren't enough for a lot of you, so our sincerest thanks to Darren Evans, from The Guiding Light tips service, for these pearls of wisdom:



"Grrrroooooaaarrrrrr!! Put down your weapon. You have 20 seconds to comply... You now have 15 seconds... 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..." BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!

EXPLORATION WITH THE MAPPER

Working at The Guiding Light, I receive many calls from frustrated Captive players who find themselves at a dead end in a base complaining from what I call the B.E.A.D.E. syndrome (Been Everywhere And Done Everything). Employ the following technique and you'll find things much easier.

When you firs enter a base, explore everywhere. If you come to a door, moveable wall or any type of witch, do NOT operate it. Instead, centre the mapper display onto your robots (see mapper instructions on how to do this), and press the highlighter button (the button to the right of the pairs of arrow buttons). This will leave a red dot at the location of the door, wall or switch. Think of this dot as something still to be operated.

Continue exploring, marking as you go, until you've explored as much of the level as you can. By then, you should have killed every free-roaming alien in this area and collected all available items. The next step is to go to one of the red dots and - before operating the door, wall or switch - press the highlighter button again to turn off the red dot. Once into the newly-revealed area follow the same procedure of marking all areas of interest. This way you'll never miss anything. By the way, it's a good idea to save your game before entering a new area - you never know just what's behind that door!

Another way of using the 'highlighter' is to differentiate between doors, walls and switches by leaving differing numbers of dots in a position. This is particularly handy for switches, such as the 'eight pushbutton' and 'line-grid' types, which require the correspondingly numbered clipboard. Also, if I find the generators with part of the base still unexplored then I leave lots of dots, making the room easier to find later on.

Repeat this process throughout the base on each level and you will greatly reduce the likelihood of acquiring the dreaded B.E.A.D.E. syndrome!

DICE AND DOORS

These are used to help you open the doors with the four buttons in the corners. First face the door, then put the die in the hand of a robot. Click on the die with the right mouse button to roll it. The die will change to the number four. Think of each dot as representing one of the buttons. Keep rolling and each will turn red, indicating which buttons to press. Simple, eh?Unfortunately, they don't work on the base entry/exit doors. Remember that surplus dice can be used to blow up mines.

FLOOR GRATING SWITCHES:

If you stand on these, you'll find a wall appears, blocking your retreat to the base exit. You must search every wall cupboard and click the left mouse button all over the back wall of the cupboard. Eventually you'll find a loose brick which will push in, removing the offending wall. Normally the cupboard is empty and often close by, though sometimes hidden.

COMBAT TACTICS:

Use your environment to your advantage. Where ever possible, lure an enemy to a door and close it on him whilst firing - the combined damage will reduce the killing time. (Aah, I remember using this tactic in *Dungeon Master*.) If you still get killed too easily, then find an open space where you can keep your distance and run around the alien, firing at its back and sides and dodging its bullets (use the greaser for an extra turn of speed).

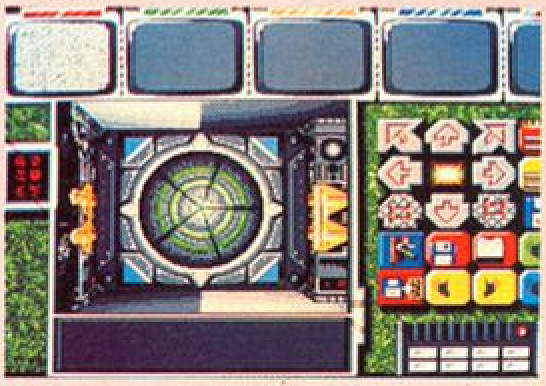
Most aliens are pretty thick. As an example, picture a corridor that you're walking down. You come to a door about halfway, with a number of aliens on the other side. If you stand in front of the door, the aliens will try to shoot you through the door, and any fellow aliens standing in the way! Click on the SLEEP button. In no time the aliens will have killed each other until there's only one remaining - far more easy! However, keep an eye out for walking TVs which shoot fireballs through mesh doors and missiles which open wavy blue doors.

If you get in a scrap near a ladder here are a couple of tactics which you should bear in mind. First and my favourite, activate the camera on the level with the alien you are fighting and switch it on. Go up (or down) the ladder and view the camera screen. The moving patch of yellow is the location of the alien, while the dark patch on the floor is the position of the ladder. Turn the camera to face the ladder and watch as the alien moves on and off the dark patch. When the alien moves away from the patch, duck down the ladder, safe on the knowledge that it'll have its back to you and fire off a volley of shots. Then pop up the ladder as the alien turns to face you (probably in disgust at such cowardly tactics) and repeat the process. Those poor souls on the space station (Level 10) will find this particularly useful.

The second tactic is very effective but hard to implement. Any alien or group of them can be instantly killed by dropping on top of them as they stand under the ladder. However, this is very tricky to bring about because if the alien(s) have a space to move to as you fall on them, they'll ALWAYS get out of the way. For success you once again need the camera and the alien must have nowhere to go: this situation only arises when there is more than one alien milling about and your target is surrounded by aliens and walls which will keep it trapped under the ladder. It's a very satisfying move when done correctly, though!

There you go, Captive fans! More food for thought. Once again, thanks to Darren and The Guiding Light.

The Guiding Light are a tips service available between noon and midnight, seven days a week. Give 'em a call and you'll be able to speak directly to people like Darren who play the top games and should be able to help you out of any sticky situations. Their number is 0898 338933, and all calls are charged at 33p off-peak and 44p any other time, so be sure to ask the permission of the bill payer before you start 'phoning!



See 'Dice and Doors' for an easy way of getting past doors!

CONGRATULATIONS
THE CLOCKS ARE NOW
THREE HOURS FORWARD
YOU HAVE TWO
OF THE FIVE GAME
COMPLETION ITEMS
0015630
GREMLINS 2
THE NEW BATCH
0000000
19
03
5-34

Two items collected! Use the fantastic cheat below and getting this far and even further should be no problem at all!

BUY
S.INFO
EXIT

With this handy cheat for *Supremacy* you'll be able to buy as many of these mean-looking muthas as you could possibly want.

Gremlins 2

Not the easiest of games, I'm sure you'll agree. So this cheat mode, found by S. Lalies of Newport, should come in handy. When you get on the high-score table type in 'SINATRA'. You should then find yourself with infinite lives!! Yum, yum!!

Kick Off 2

More cheats for the ultimate footy game, this time from Paul Turner and Matthew Seekings on the C64 version. If you press RESTORE to quit the game when your team is in clear-cut possession of the ball then your team will win, regardless of the score! What's the point of that!?

Supremacy

This excellent space strategy game is not easy, especially with the cost of space hardware these days. Wouldn't it be nice if you couldn't open a special ACE account at the galactic bank and get infinite credits? Well, thanks to Matthew and Peter Warner from Basildon, you can! Type in this AMIGA basic routine, save it, then insert your *Supremacy* disc and run the program. The routine doesn't write to your game disc so there's no risk of corruption.

```
10 REM Infinite Credits for AMIGA Supremacy
20 SUM=0: DIM CODE%(124)
30 FOR COUNT=0 TO 123
40 READ WORD$: WORD=VAL("&H"+WORD$)
50 SUM=SUM+WORD
60 CODE%(COUNT)=WORD
70 NEXT COUNT
80 IF SUM<>01605581 THEN PRINT "CHECK-
SUM ERROR. CHECK YOUR LISTING":STOP
90 CHEAT=VARPTR(CODE%(0)): CALL CHEAT
100 REM ****************************
110 DATA 7046, E988, 7202, 2C78, 0004,
4EAE, FF3A, 2840
120 DATA 4A80, 6700, 008A, 7C30, 7E40,
E98F, 70FF, 4EAE
130 DATA FEB6, 4BF4, 6008, 3AC7, 429D,
3AC0, 5280, 6700
140 DATA 006E, 93C9, 4EAE, FEDA, 2AC0,
2A8D, 2B4D, 0008
150 DATA 589D, 4295, 4BEC, 0008, 7A05,
1A85, 41F4, 6000
160 DATA 5C8D, 2AC8, 3A86, 41FA, 008E,
4280, 4281, 224C
170 DATA 4EAE, FE44, 4A80, 6636, 224C,
D8FC, 0060, 337C
180 DATA 0002, 001C, 41E9, 0024, 20C7,
20CC, 4290, 3346
190 DATA 0012, 4EAE, FE38, 41FA, 0018,
45F8, 0300, 294A
200 DATA 021A, 703F, 24D8, 51C8, FFFC,
4EEC, 000C, 4E75
210 DATA 45F9, 0007, 2000, 41F9, 0007,
2B50, 6130, 41F8
220 DATA 35F4, 45F8, 0900, 6126, 50F8,
35A6, 245A, 41F8
230 DATA 4304, 611A, 31FC, 6026, 5E1E,
33FC, 6006, 0000
240 DATA 9C3C, 33FC, 4AA9, 0000, 9D5E,
4EF8, 0900, 30FC
250 DATA 4EF9, 209F, 4ED2, 7472, 6163,
6B64, 6973, 6B2E
260 DATA 6465, 7669, 6365, 0000
270 REM ****************************
280 REM Type this listing into AMIGA Basic and
insert your
290 REM Supremacy disc in Drive 0. If an alert
appears click
300 REM on cancel. Now run this program and
Supremacy should
310 REM load as usual but you'll have infinite
credits.
```

Toyota Celica GT Rally

Dave Gibson from Groomsport in Northern Ireland sends this brilliant cheat for this equally brilliant rally simulation. When the game says "Start your engine" at the beginning of each rally stage, press CONTROL and the 'C' key at the same time to freeze the clock. It is now possible to complete the entire game in a record time of 00:00:00! Beat that!

F19 Stealth Fighter

Following on from last month's tip special there's this special routine that'll give you infinite weapons - very handy, I'm sure you'll agree! Again, thanks to those happy hackers Matthew and Peter. As with the *Supremacy* routine, type it in, save it, insert your game disc then run the routine.

```
10 REM Infinite Weapons for AMIGA F19 Stealth
Fighter
```

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Commodore A500
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A500 BATMAN PACK

AMIGA 500
BATMAN PACK

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For the more serious or professional applications user, Commodore have a selection of systems based around the expandable Amiga 2000, at prices from £1295+VAT. The A2000 features a full 1Mb RAM (expandable to 9Mb), 9 system expansion slots, plus IBM compatibility with the use of PC-XT or PC-AT bridgeboards. Complete and return the coupon, putting a tick in the A2000 box, for details of A2000 computer systems.

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F29 RETALIATOR:

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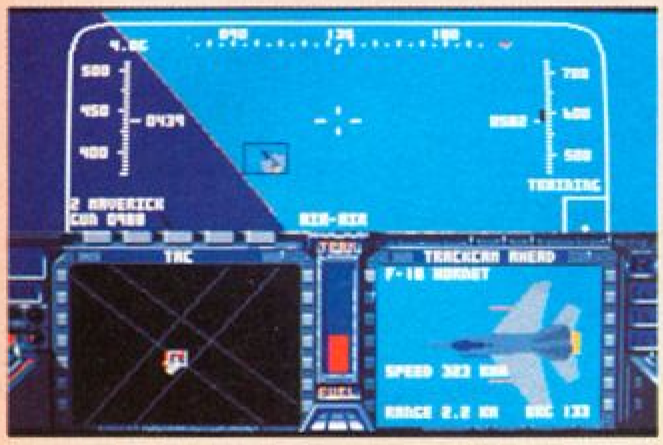
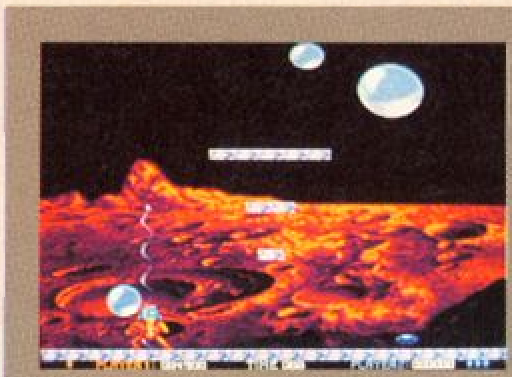


Blast away to your heart's delight when you type in this cheat for *F19*.

```
20 SUM=0: DIM CODE%(114)
30 FOR COUNT=0 TO 113
40 READ WORD$: WORD=VAL("&H"+WORD$)
50 SUM=SUM+WORD
60 CODE%(COUNT)=WORD
70 NEXT COUNT
80 IF SUM<>1534165& THEN PRINT "CHECK-
SUM ERROR. CHECK YOUR LISTING":STOP
90 CHEAT=VARPTR(CODE%(0)): CALL CHEAT
100 REM ******************************
110 DATA 7046, E988, 7202, 2C78, 0004,
4EAE, FF3A, 2840
120 DATA 4A80, 6700, 00A2, 7C30, 7E40,
E98F, 70FF, 4EAE
130 DATA FEB6, 4BF4, 6008, 3AC7, 429D,
3AC0, 5280, 6700
140 DATA 0086, 93C9, 4EAE, FEDA, 2AC0,
2A8D, 2D4D, 0008
150 DATA 589D, 4295, 4BEC, 0008, 7A05,
1A85, 41F4, 6000
160 DATA 5C8D, 2AC8, 3A86, 41FA, 007A,
4280, 4281, 224C
170 DATA 4EAE, FE44, 4A80, 664E, 224C,
D8FC, 0060, 337C
180 DATA 0002, 001C, 41E9, 0024, 20C7,
20CC, 4290, 3346
190 DATA 0012, 4EAE, FE38, 41F8, 0300,
3948, 006C, 45FA
200 DATA 000A, 701F, 611A, 4EEC, 000C,
31FC, 602C, 716E
210 DATA 41F8, 719C, 45FA, 0012, 700C,
6104, 4EF8, 1000
220 DATA 30DA, 51C8, FFFC, 4E75, 0C6C,
0034, 0006, 6610
230 DATA 33FC, 6026, 0003, EB94, 33FC,
4E75, 0003, EE22
240 DATA 4EDR, 7472, 6163, 6B64, 6973,
7B2E, 6465, 7669
250 DATA 6365, 0000
260 REM ******************************
270 REM Type this listing into AMIGA Basic and
insert your
280 REM F19 disc in Drive 0. If an alert appears
click
290 REM on cancel. Now run this program and
F19 should
300 REM load as usual but you'll have infinite
credits.
```

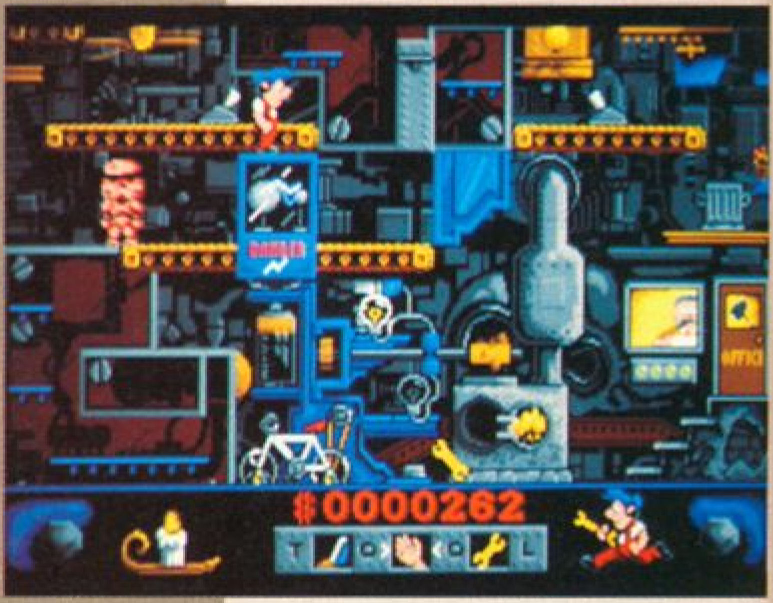


Oops Up!

This *Pang* clone has 100 mega-hard levels, but it seems that many of you are having trouble seeing even the tenth! To help you out, here are the first 40 level pass codes, provided by Malcolm and Alex McIlwee from Derby.

Level 1: PO01
Level 2: DK51
Level 3: 30FJ
Level 4: FL59
Level 5: Q058
Level 6: FA20
Level 7: 5F6J
Level 8: CK04
Level 9: WF05
Level 10: D04G
Level 11: 40V8
Level 12: FDLO
Level 13: V03D
Level 14: 49FD
Level 15: WAQD
Level 16: X038
Level 17: UU09
Level 18: 40FJ
Level 19: X03C
Level 20: DK49
Level 21: G8LD
Level 22: P49X
Level 23: A0A5
Level 24: 39VS
Level 25: XPE4
Level 26: FE5C
Level 27: CXE5
Level 28: 32H4
Level 29: PD30
Level 30: 10F4
Level 31: D947
Level 32: FD4G
Level 33: DK48
Level 34: 206G
Level 35: DK39
Level 36: DGLO
Level 37: DO49
Level 38: 6P05
Level 39: F049
Level 40: 4G7H

Balloon-popping action from *Oops Up!*



NIGHT SHIFT™

Do well at the factory on your *Night Shift* and you could earn enough cash to buy yourself a lovely little house.

Night Shift

This smashing platform game is a bit of a departure from Lucasfilm's usual graphic adventures. It's not easy, though, so here's ACE's very own David Upchurch with some general tips, and as if that wasn't enough, the pass codes to the first 15 levels (they should work on any format).

- Having got the BEAST running, the best place to stay is in the paint control area with the three dials and the flush chain. Moving up and down, try to position the scroll so that you can see both the colour in the paint trough AND the toy moulds in use. This way you can make sure that you've mixed the right colour for the right toy.

- If your not careful, a couple of toys can be painted incorrectly when the moulds change. With good timing, you need never waste one. If your BEAST is set up correctly, the first part of a toy to go in for painting should always be the body. When you see the moulds being changed, run to the required paint dial (or flush chain, if necessary) and wait.

You should see the last head from the 'old' toy being pushed out of the mould and enter the bin on the right of the screen. Then the first body of the 'new' toy should be thrown into the left bin. As the 'old' toy's head drops down to the paint spray jets, quickly make all the paint changes needed. By the time the jets react, the toy head should have passed through and been painted the correct colour, while the jets are now ready to spray the new colour on the new body.

● Lemmings and lawyers are a pain. Keep jumping and they won't get you. In the later levels, the lemmings start meddling with the BEAST, unscrewing bolts and flushing the paint trough. Leave flytraps beneath the area at risk to deal with that problem.

● From Level 14 onwards there's a bonus for getting the toys into the correct packing crates. However, it is JUST a bonus and it's quite small, so it's not really worth the time wasted leaving the vital paint control area. Concentrate on getting the correctly-coloured toy quota instead.

LEVEL CODES:
(In the following: BA = banana; CH = cherry; LE = lemon; PL = plum; PI = pineapple)

Level 1: As passcode
Level 2: CH-BA-BA-LE
Level 3: BA-CH-PI-PL
Level 4: PI-LE-PI-PL
Level 5: PI-PI-LE-CH
Level 6: CH-PL-PL-PI
Level 7: CH-PI-LE-BA
Level 8: PI-BA-PI-CH
Level 9: PI-LE-LE-CH
Level 10: LE-BA-PL-PL
Level 11: BA-PI-CH-PL
Level 12: CH-PL-BA-PL
Level 13: PL-CH-BA-PI
Level 14: PI-CH-PL-BA
Level 15: PL-PL-PI-PI

TNT Console Corner

NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

KID ICARUS

Fancy having a sneaky peek at the final level of this bizarre game? Then enter this easy-to-remember password: AuW2e5 XcdF00 Mt000G K50Wuu. Thanks to Snardy Cadette from Walthamstow for that.

TRACK AND FIELD

Thanks to Ben Butler from Bradford for these handy passwords for Days 2 to 8 of this sporty thrash:

Day 2: DHLK*4ZLG
Day 3: DRLKQ3Z1G
Day 4: GRLK*3Z1G
Day 5: DR1KQ4PLN
Day 6: MBH+*4P1(heart)
Day 7: ZB(down arrow)WQ3PLN
Day 8: R(down arrow)B55PPL1

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

GOLFMANIA

Tim Farnsworth from Sheffield has this sneaky cheat to let even the worst player complete the game. Should you foul a shot when playing 'Stroke Play' or 'Tournament', then press RESET while the computer is displaying 'Out of bounds', 'In rough', etc. Now continue the game and you'll be allowed to replay your last shot! Handy, eh?

ATARI LYNX

ZARLOR MERCENARY

This so-so shoot-'em-up can get pretty tough, so thanks to Emmet Fitzpatrick from Corkeeran, Ireland, for these essential playing tips to the first three levels:

General:

● If playing the one-player game then select Landru (armed with power shots).

● If one level is proving really difficult then try changing your weaponry or tactics or both.

● Like many shoot-'em-ups, bonus positioning and alien movement patterns are always the same, so learn and survive.

● Force your Lynx-owning mates to buy the game so that you can team up for some mega firepower!

Level 1:

You must pick up the lazer, autofire and speed-up that appear at the start of the level (you won't last long otherwise!). A second lazer and autofire appear mid-way through the level. Keep blasting away at the aliens hordes to rack up a high score until you reach the end-of-level baddy. More laser-button bashing should see him off!

Shop 1:

If you survived Level 1 without losing a life then you should be able to do the same on Level 2, so just buy one of each of the following: speed-up, side-shooters, wing cannons and autofire. If you've got any extra cash spend it on extra lives.

Level 2:

Pick up the lazer. Alien attack is pretty heavy and you're not yet built to cope, so hang around the left-hand side of the screen and pick off as many as possible. Don't forget to collect the shield mid-way through the level.

When you get to the end-of-level bad guy, the best piece of advice is keep moving! Fly left and right, take out the middle section first and then deal with the two side lazers. And remember - keep moving!

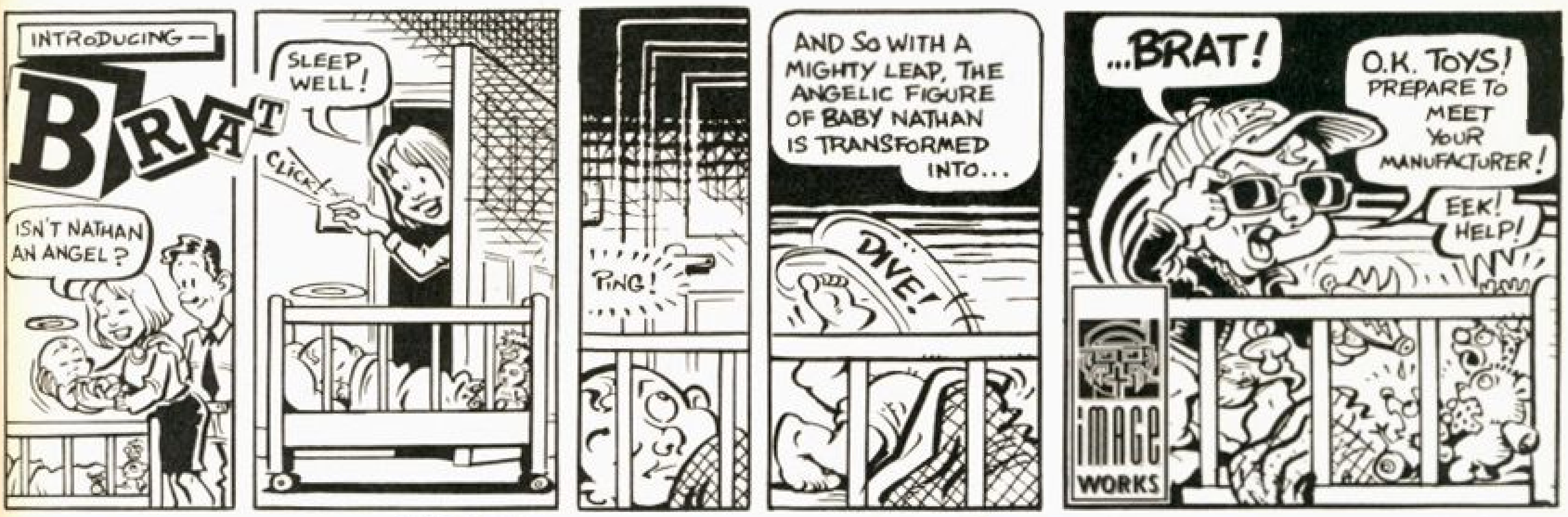
Shop 2:

Sell all your extra except the speed-up and buy as many lives and mega-bombs as possible. The next level's a real b*stard!

Level 3:

Keep to the right-hand side of the screen. Don't waste valuable bombs on the giant monsters that zoom down the screen - just avoid them. And forget about your score, concentrate on staying alive instead! Use the bombs on the weird bullet-spitting meanies and finish them off with your bullets.

The end-of-level nasty will follow you around, so lure it down to the bottom-left of the screen and keep blasting at its centre with everything you've got. When the alien finally breathes its last, don't you breathe a sigh of relief - you've still got two more levels to go! Good luck!


INTRODUCING —
BRAT
ISN'T NATHAN AN ANGEL?
SLEEP WELL!
CLICK!
PING!
AND SO WITH A MIGHTY LEAP, THE ANGELIC FIGURE OF BABY NATHAN IS TRANSFORMED INTO...
DIVE!
...BRAT!
O.K. TOYS! PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MANUFACTURER!
EEK! HELP!
IMAGE WORKS

THE REAL ADVENTURES OF BRAT, THE ANTI CUTE, ARE AVAILABLE SOON FROM IMAGE WORKS ON AMIGA AND ST

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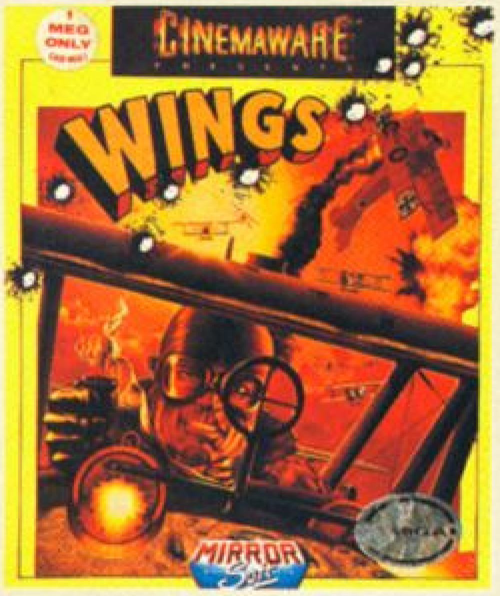
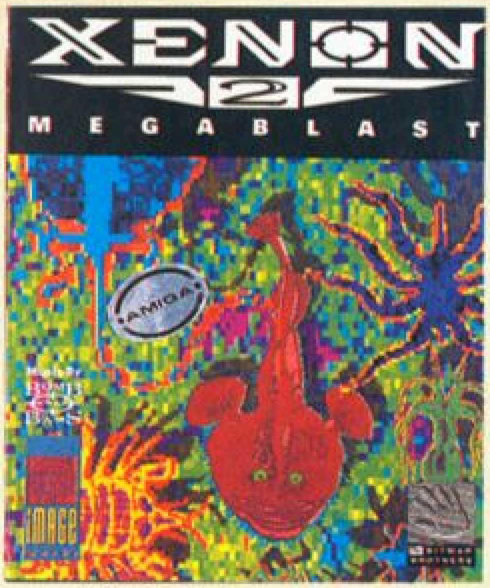
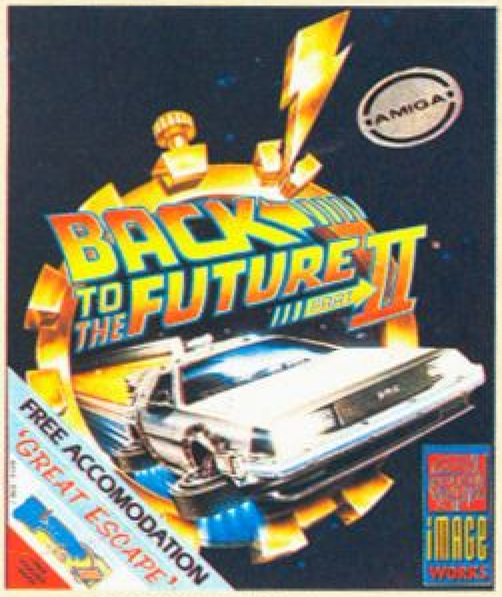

1 MEG ONLY
CINEMAWARE
WINGS
MIRROR SOFT
AMIGA

WINGS


XENON 2
MEGABLAST
AMIGA

XENON 2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Back To The Future 2	*Amiga, ST,PC, Spec, C64, Amst,CPC*
Cadaver	*Amiga, ST*
Dungeon Master	*Amiga, 1 Meg ST*

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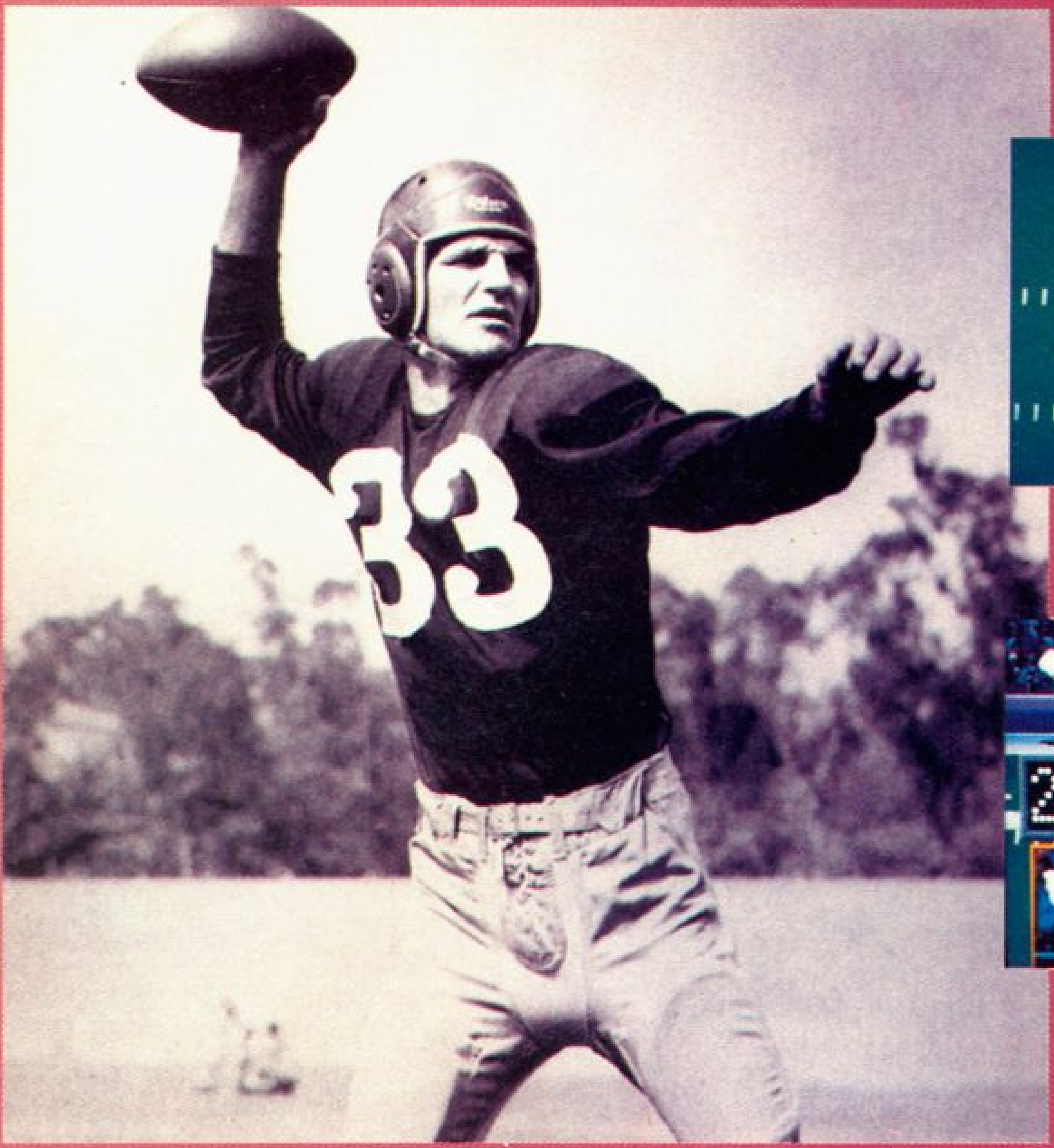
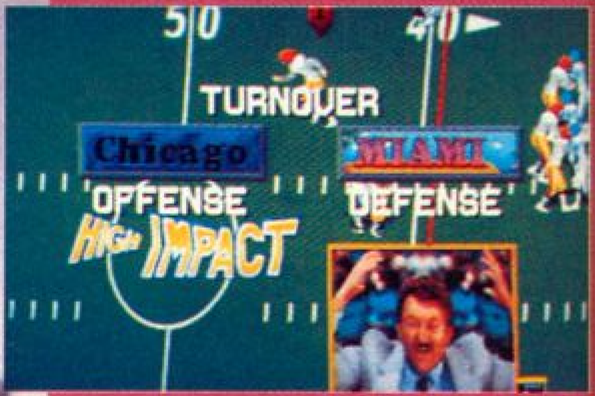
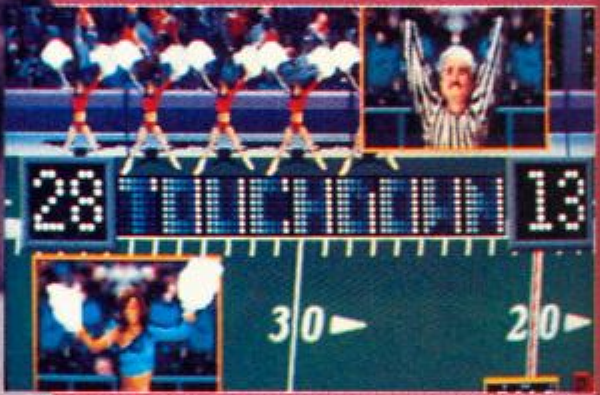
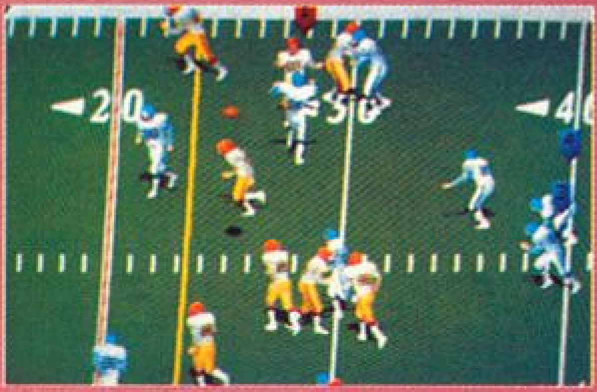




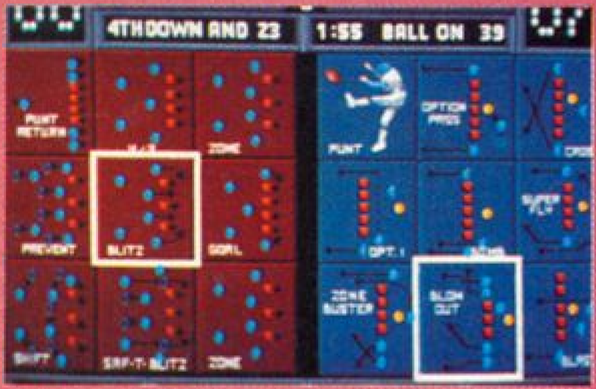
***High Impact* - and high anxiety for your Head Coach a-rantin' and a-ravin' on the team bench.**



Score a touchdown and you'll get digitised images of your loyal and lovely cheerleaders shaking their all in support.



***High Impact* in action - superbly animated players smack and crunch into each other. This is arguably the best American footy game in the arcades.**



From this screen you can choose a new play tactic.

PLAY BALL

* * * * * * * *

So you were one of the chosen who stayed up to the wee hours watching the Super Bowl in January - and weren't we all rewarded with a cliffhanger of a game that set the pulse racing, the breath holding and the Budweiser flying?

OK, so Buffalo lost - I can take defeat, humiliation and the consequent transfer of funds that ensued, particularly now that I can go down to the local arcade and replay the whole thing, only make sure I don't miss the 48 yard field goal.

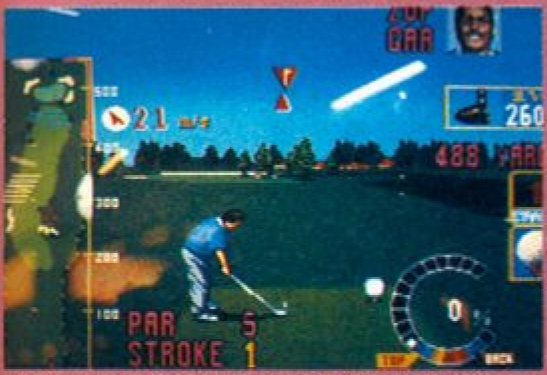
It has to be said that decent American Football games have been a little thin on the ground recently. A few years back we had *10 Yard Fight* and the multi-player fans were treated to *Temco Bowl* in '88, but, y'know, there's never really been one that stood out as completely marvellous. Until now.

Enter please, from Williams, *High Impact* - the game that, so they claim, "brings football to life with the energy and strategy of a non-stop highlight film!". It certainly looks like someone has taken the production and presentation values of something like Cinemaware's *TV Sports Football* and transferred them to the coin-op area, with the extra graphics and sound that can be used therein. Good stuff, you might think and you'd be right.

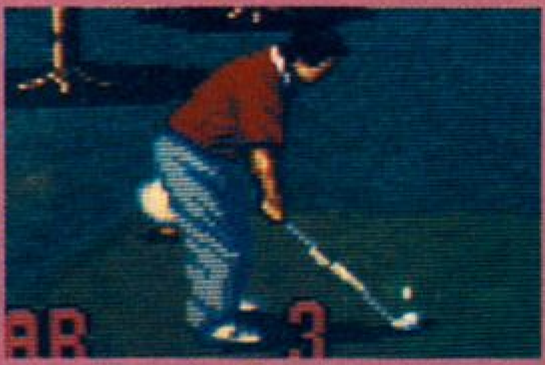
High Impact makes an impression because Williams has packed megabytes worth of digitised graphics into the machine and uses these images in favour of the usual sprite technology. This gives the main playfield - a scrolling left/right screen - a very distinctive look that grabs the eye immediately.

But what about the gameplay? Well, it's not too difficult to pick up, assuming you are conversant with the rules and subset of English language used in the game. The Blitz option, for example, does not necessitate dropping large amounts of high explosive on the London Metropolitan area - but ends up being almost as violent and just as noisy.

Play selection is made via some easy-to-use sub-menus and then you - or you plus a friend - control a nominated player on the field. Snap the ball and the usual free-for-all ensues, with a digi-

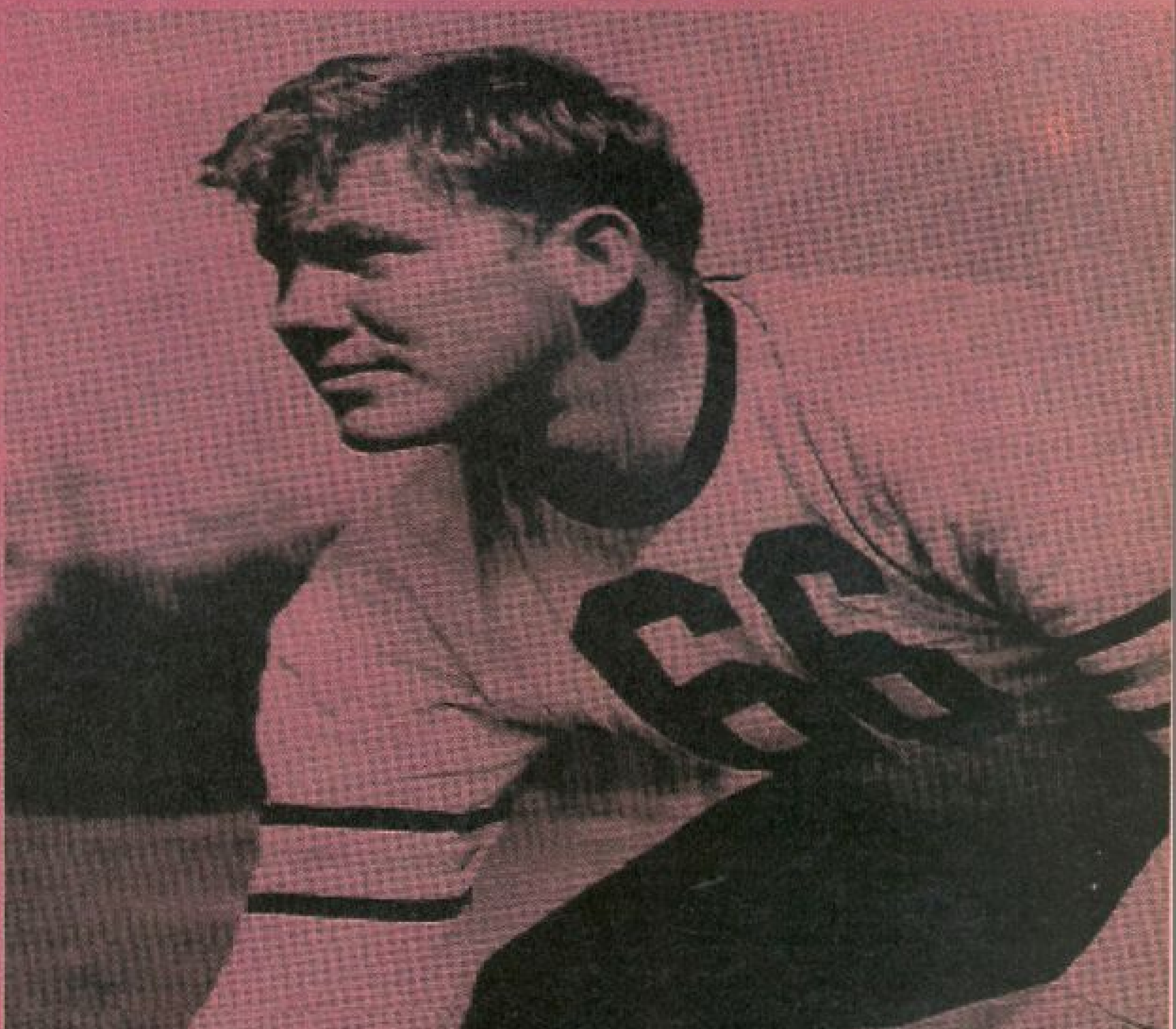


Golfing Greats - Is this really the best game idea that arcade manufacturers can come up with in this day and age?



Each golfer's swing is well-animated, you could almost believe the little guy on the screen was you - almost.

Williams
FunHouse



tised, animated ref calling the shots and likewise a Head Coach jumping up and down, expressing strong emotions over each decision. Nice stuff.

With up to 4 players catered for, bags of humour, sound and gameplay, this is the nearest any of us are likely to get to the Superbowl. If you enjoy watching American football and like the idea of playing it for real, save yourself severe physical punishment and go for *High Impact*.

Incidently, some types have been claiming that *Rad Mobile* - the new Sega title that boasts impressive graphics, but precious little else, is the first 32-bit arcade game. Wrong! Williams, again, can claim that first with *NARC*, released a year or so ago. It contained a true 32-bit graphics processor and therefore had loadsa colours and sprites all jumping around with great speed. Just thought it was worth putting the record straight there.....

We'll be reviewing Atari's new game, *Ramparts*, next month, after some extensive playtesting. Initial giggles and barely suppressed mirth have grown into a sneaking intrigue and curiosity. Personally, I still think that whoever authorised burning those ROM's needs intensive therapy involving extended bed rest and consumption of much Lucozade, but still....the definitive report when it arrives. Just so those Atari fans know any corporate insanity isn't terminal, however, I've been giving that three-screened *Race Drivin'* we showed last month considerable wads of cash and can now officially report that it isn't half bad.

Finally, in a month that's brought little new to the arcades, another plug for Konami's new golf game. *Golfing Greats* is without question up there with Sega's *Super Masters* as best golf game ever.

At last, good use has been made of Konami's hardware sprite-expansion routines and it's been combined with some great playability. Until VR golf comes out - this may be as good as it gets.

On a not completely unrelated topic, I have a confession to make. I love pinball - and consummated that passion by treating myself to a Williams' *Comet* a while back. But still it seems that the Brits just don't get the hang of the game - as opposed to the States, where pins are almost half of the coin-op business, and France, where you can't move but bump into one.

In the UK, however, it's pitiful to see helpless young people with impressionable minds watching inferior players walking up to a pinball machine - and pressing both flippers at once. Of course, you know better than that, eh?

Ho humm - but who knows, perhaps the crop of excellent games that are out there at the moment might just lure a few gamers off the PCB's and nto the game where you can seriously show off and seem enigmatically attractive to women at the same time - Pinball.

Bally Midway concentrate on designing accessible, simple to understand tables - such as *Elvira - Mistress of the Dark* which contained that memorable digitised phrase, "Ohhh - nice organ." Their latest is called *Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball*, which celebrates the 50th birthday of the smartest rabbit in Christendom.

With the novelty of an unusual lower playfield and stacks of sound effects straight out of the cartoons, plus the bonus of very few ways to lose the ball - this should appeal to the first timer, so give it a try.

Williams, on the other hand, make games for the expert player, such as the fine *Diner* (designed by the same guy that did *Taxi*, I bet) and now what may well become a true classic, *Funhouse*.

It's one that rewards skill and fast reactions, with some great progressive features and a theme that builds on the Williams traditions built up with *Comet* and *Cyclone*.

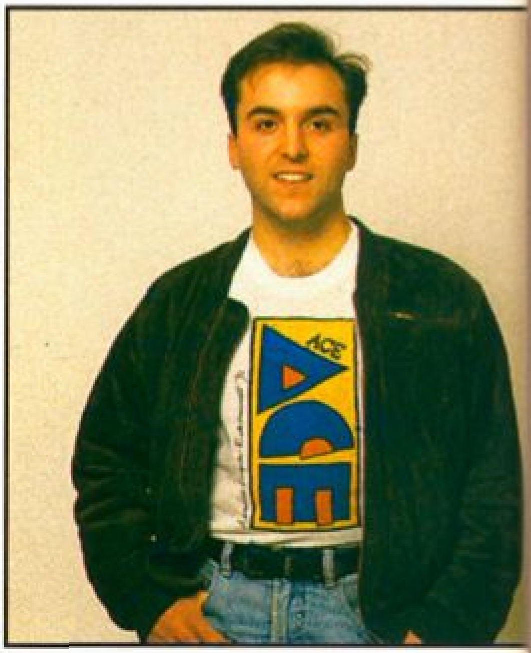
With the whole thing being orchestrated by a life-size ventriloquist's dumm, *Funhouse* lives up to its name. And it's preprogrammed to punch you in the nuts if you ever press both flippers at once. OK?

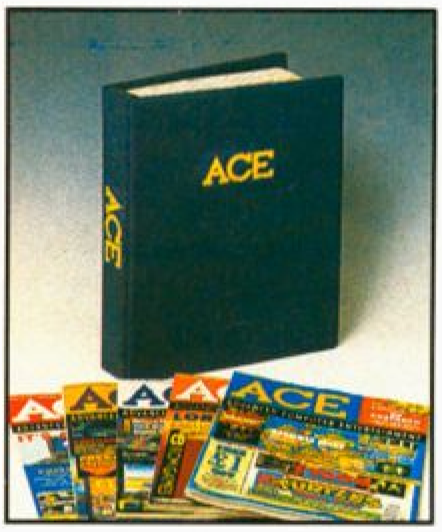
Finally, news that if you want to experience the *R360* mention last issue for yourself, get down to Funland in London's Trocadero, Piccadilly Circus. Possibly the best arcade in the UK, it now has one with *G-Loc* running on board - if you can get there just do it, the experience is amazing, but be prepared to cough up a lot of dosh to do so.....list price for one of those babes is about £70,000. Ouch!

Next month - a full show report from the UK's biggest coin-op trade show North of Cricklewood, being held in sumptuous surroundings of Blackpool's Winter Gardens plus the low down on how Channel 4's *Crystal Maze* is going to make a world first in arcade electronic entertainment.

ACE MERCHANDISE OFFER

There can surely be nothing more sexy and fashionable than the ACE t-shirt. This latest item in the *Ace Clothing Collection* is what every self respecting computing genius will be wearing this season. The eye catching ensemble has been exclusively designed by ACE's own art editor, Jim "Gaultier" Willis, for the lover of fine things and the reader with good taste. The t-shirt is available in sizes small, medium and extra large and can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of £5.99





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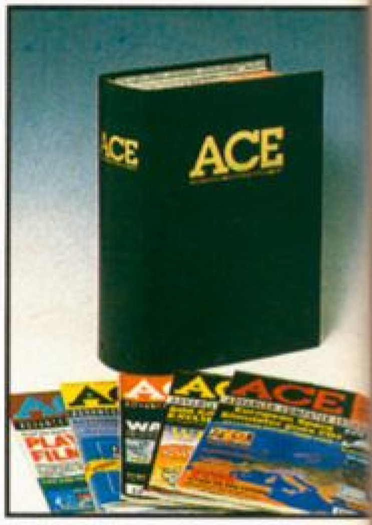

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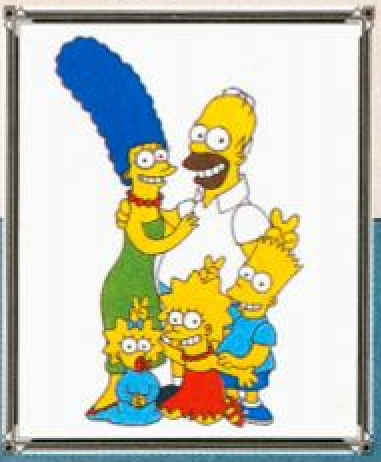
DO THE BART MAN

Look out Turtles, there's a new Bart craze. He's already got to number one in the music charts, he's seen everywhere on T-shirts and soon he'll be appearing in console and computer games. ACE is there to meet them...

Prepare yourself for *The Simpsons*, the licensing phenomenon of the year. This popular American Twentieth Century Fox television cartoon series has inspired a whole host of 'goodies' from toys complete with their own speech bubbles to Bart bath salts. There are even bootleg Simpsons T-shirts featuring a politically-aware black Bart.

These multi-million dollar sellers all based on the original family of characters created by cartoonist Matt Groening. *The Simpsons* show has surpassed *The Cosby Show* in teen ratings in the USA, and European viewers are increasingly tuning into the off-beat humour via BSkyB satellite TV. It doesn't end there, either. Bart is apparently 'big' in Zimbabwe and other African nations.



THE SIMPSONS' FAMILY TREE

BART

The star of *The Simpsons* show. Everybody loves the anti-hero and Bart fits the bill nicely. The all-American bad boy gets into plenty of scrapes and doesn't have the best reputation for telling the truth.

MARGE

Bart's loving mom loves to go shopping in the local mall.

HOMER

Bart's unshaven dad works at the local nuclear power plant and loves donuts.

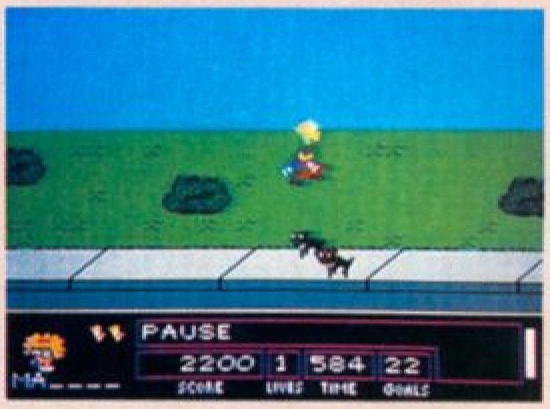
LISA

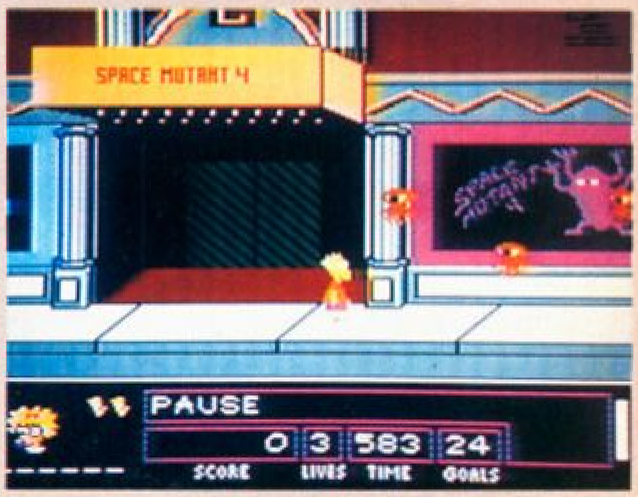
Bart's brainy sister can be seen on the 'Do the Bartman' music video dancing with Bart and playing the saxophone.

MAGGIE

Bart's baby sister is the cutest Simpson though she's too young to talk.

MATT GROENING





For further details about *The Simpsons* on the NES and Gameboy contact Acclaim Entertainment, Inc at: 71 Audrey Avenue, Oyster Bay, NY 11771, USA.

First off *The Simpsons* video game block is Acclaim - with Gameboy, NES and two dedicated handheld LCD games. By autumn, Ocean will have joined in with a computer game for the Amiga, ST, PC, Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad. Acclaim's *The Simpsons: Bart vs The Space Mutants* has just become available on NES in the States and a Gameboy title is due later in the year.

In *Bart vs. The Space Mutants* on the NES, Bart's hometown of Springfield has been invaded by aliens who inhabit human bodies. However, Bart is the only one able to see them as aliens by using special X-ray glasses, and he must convince the other Simpsons of the invaders' presence. Through five levels – including the town of Springfield, a shopping mall, museum and amusement park – Bart mischievously travels around on his skateboard, spray-paints objects, shoots a slingshot, plays at the arcade and uses a dart gun in efforts to save the earth from the alien invasion.

Acclaim's Simpsons title for the Gameboy will find Bart Simpson and his sister Lisa at an extremely regimented summer camp where bullies rule and activities such as hiking, canoeing and motorcross provide intense, rather 'unsportsmanlike' competition. Intent on escaping their sadistic summer surroundings, the Simpson siblings start to dig an underground route out of the camp. Obstacles they face include creepy crawling spiders, bedrock walls, and a maze of underground tunnels.

"Our new Simpsons games capture the essence of these popular characters through arcade-style gameplay programmed to maximise all their special appeal and their particular idiosyncrasies," says Acclaim.

Hip today, gone tomorrow. While the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles scuttle back to the sewers, bubble-eyed bad boy Bart is ready to take control.

● **Rik Haynes**

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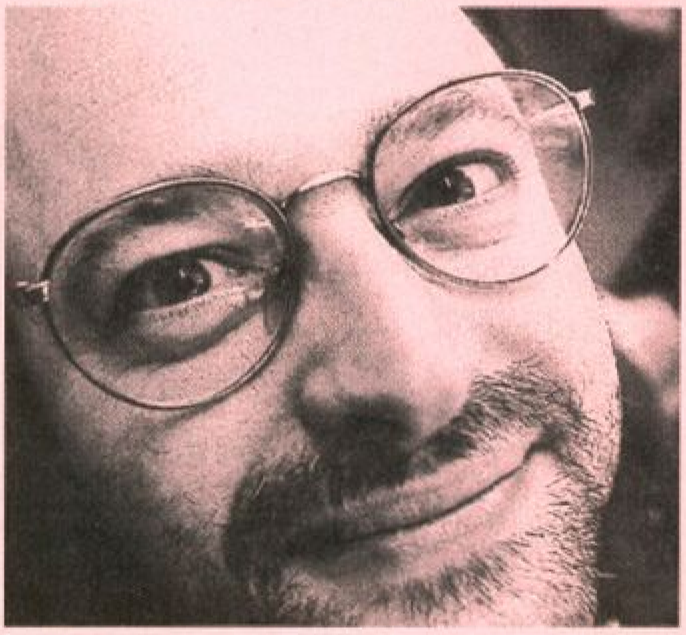
in the PINK



He's in the pink – and judging by the sight of him, you're lucky if you never meet him in the flesh. Erstwhile ACE editor Steve Cooke is now helping put together the Pink Pages for us. If you've got any suggestions on how the section could be improved, write to him at the usual ACE address (see the contents page of this issue). Also a special notice to advertisers: our fax number 071 490 1094 is temporarily out of order. Please use 071 490 1095 until further notice. And thank you to the b*****d who pinched the fax...

90 ACE Charts

If you want to add top quality software to your collection, check out the ACE Charts every month – they're the only listings in the country that tell you which games are getting the highest review marks in ALL UK magazines. If it's number one here, it should be number one on your list. And you can also win free software by predicting next month's entries.

111 Hot off the Shelf

This issue of ACE tells you what's hot NOW – but what about those other titles still sitting on the shelves? Our software buyers' guide pinpoints the games we've tipped for the top in the last few months and which should still be available.

95 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Our definitive tech listings and buyer's guide. This month: computers.

99 Direct Line

...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

129 ACE Crossword

The infamous ACE Crossward – crack it and win a prize.

121 Adventureline

Pat Winstanley with her regular section for dedicated adventurers.

117 The ACE Diary

Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

119 ACE Deals

We regret to announce that the ACE Dealers column cannot appear this month as the compiler has run away to Brazil. Dirk Longhorn steps in with Shopwatch and his views from the other side of the counter.

128 Encyclopaedia Micromannica!

If you've missed a vital issue, check here...

127 PD Update

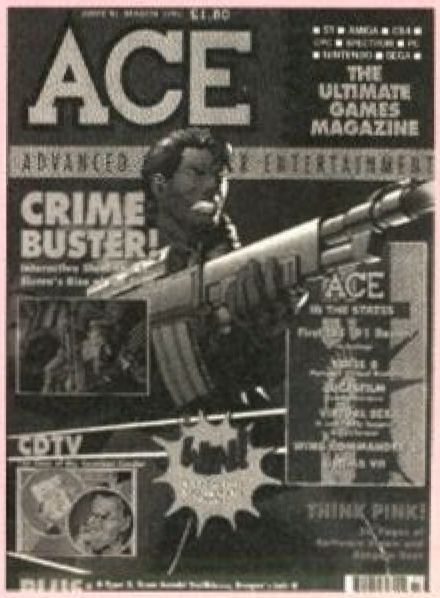
Mark Smiddy picks out a couple of Public Domain budget packages

112 ACE Readers Pages

Your chance to sell that old machine that's been gathering dust in the attic since the day you finally cracked Atic Atac.

130 The Blitter End

Our chance to have the last word,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ACE has brought you over 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, which gave you exclusive coverage of the first PC based VR system – then check out page 128

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH – as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DID YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

Round 15 entrants put on a good show of predicting last month's entries, with the top game in every category spotted by at least one person and even the top softco in the Stockmarket correctly spotted by a couple of sharp stock-watchers. **A. McTiernan** of Purley was in with a winner with *R-Type* on the Spectrum. On the CPC, the Psygnosis *Shadow of the Beast* conversion was spotted by **Christopher Allan** of Bridge of Earn.**Simon Edwardes** of Bristol played safe with the PC chart and guessed, along with several others, that *Wing Commander* would continue its triumphant progress – though that seems to have come to an end this month (see the PC chart). **Michael Taylor** of Kenilworth got *Speedball 2* for the ST and **Erik de Loos** won again by spotting top softco Origin. **Nisar Anwar** of Birmingham correctly predicted *Prince of Persia* for the Amiga and **Mark Gooding** of Leatherhead nailed *Rick Dangerous II* for the C64. Well done lads – prizes are on their way.

What you can win...

You'll get a mystery game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH's top chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC charts on these pages. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's Index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, Microprose's current titles are worth 8.5 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we compile the figures for all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software index: 75.5

On the rise again – it's been over 75 per cent since December 1990

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX
Sierra	87.84	+16.59	12.34
Rainbow Arts	86.67	+10.23	11.17
Audiogenic	85.67	-3.33	10.17
Core Design	84.67	+2.67	9.17
Microprose	84	+3.12	8.5
Gremlin	83.86	-3.1	8.36
Hit Squad	83.33	+13.39	7.83
Psygnosis	82.31	+0.36	6.81
Digital Int'n	81.33	+7.63	5.83
Atlantis	81	+32	5.5
Image Works	80.08	+11.52	4.58
Origin	80	-20	4.5
Activision	79.67	-1.08	4.17
Accolade	79.43	+5.36	3.93
US Gold	79.04	+3.98	3.54
Infogrames	78.88	+9.31	3.38
Electronic Arts	78.70	-2.19	3.2
UbiSoft	78.07	+5.07	2.57
Ocean	77.91	-3.38	2.41
Millennium	77.25	+1.25	1.75
Code Masters	77	+17.9	1.5
Action 16	75.58	+0.98	0.08
Mindscape	75.33	+3.25	-0.17
Empire	74.87	-3.69	-0.63
Mastertronic	74.5	-3.34	-1

AMIGA

Lemmings	Psygnosis	94.75
Turrican II	Rainbow Arts	92
Exterminator	Audiogenic	90
Pro Tennis Tour II	Ubi Soft	88.5
Cosmic Pirate	Action 16	87

It was almost inevitable that Lemmings would zoom in at number one once properly reviewed. Justified hype, for once...

C64

Turrican II	Rainbow Arts	94
Exterminator	Audiogenic	91
Ivan Ironman Stewart	Virgin	85.05
NARC	Ocean	78.5
Dragon Breed	Activision	77.5

Turrican II and Exterminator look well up to the standard of their 16-bit counterparts, but there's not much strength in depth in the current batch of releases.

AMSTRAD CPC

Twin World	Ubi Soft	83.17
TNT	Domark	83.17
Pro Golf	Code Masters	74.5
Guardian Angel	Code Masters	72
Ace/Ace 2	Encore	59.25

Ubi Soft obviously knows a thing or two about CPC games. Last month it had three titles in this chart, including the number one, this time, a fourth Ubi Soft game takes over the top slot.

IBM PC

Prince of Persia	Domark	92.63
Wing Commander	Origin	90
Rise of the Dragon	Sierra	88.67
Covert Action	Microprose	86.5
4D Sports Driving	Mindscape	83.75

Wing Commander surrenders to the superb Prince of Persia after months at the top

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN...

First, of course, you've got the game. Then the software house and – in the last column – the average score (converted to a percentage with typical ACE precision to two decimal places) the game received in ALL reviews during the last month. Don't forget that the review ratings are taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so we don't necessarily agree with some of the judgements here, but all review ratings are, to a certain extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
OPPOSITE

HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
The top softco will be...(name of company)'

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize, then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for – it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. REMEMBER – YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT **ONE** JACKPOT CATEGORY!

STEP SIX

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (31st March). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The first correct forecast for each category taken out of the hat wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize. And don't forget to include the Round Number!

THIS IS ROUND 17

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identify entries. You MUST include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by March 31st 1991.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

ATARI ST

Powermonger	**Electronic Arts**	92.55
Speedball 2	**Image Works**	91.5
Exterminator	**Audiogenic**	88
Prince of Persia	**Domark**	86
Battle Command	**Ocean**	84.98

Powermonger is just about the only game that could dislodge Speedball 2. Audiogenic has hit a goldmine with Exterminator – it's in three of the format charts this month.

SPECTRUM

Pang	**Ocean**	93.5
North and South	**Infogrames**	93
WEC Le Mans	**Hit Squad**	91
F-16 Combat Pilot	**Digital Integration**	90
Operation Wolf	**Hit Squad**	87.5

An all-new Spectrum chart, with two strong full price games at the top, and a couple of budget oldies holding their own

HOW I CREATED MY CHART-BUSTING GAME

Extracts from the diary of Sir Hugh Pixel

My grandfather, Sir Digory Pixel, often remarked that the Upper Zambezi was no place for a youngster, but it is to his missionary zeal – and the rawhide environment in which I was brought up – that I owe my tremendous success in today's computer entertainment market.

Together with my lady-wife Anna-Marie and Nortil Scroot, my faithful nurse (now, alas, dead) I founded Fabulous Games Ltd in 1991. I had taken time off from the management of the estate to attend evening classes in Business Management when Scroot, returning from a particularly tough evening in the piggery, asked if I had ever played with a Game Boy.

To cut a very short story even shorter (and to omit my indignant reply to Scroot's impertinent inquiry about my schooldays), a week later we had incorporated our limited company (cost £150, with some help from the Citizen's Advice Bureau). I arranged a meeting with the bank to get the benefit of their advice and thanks to my business schoold training was able to strike a hard bargain with Mr Gabthwaite, that I would give them the deeds to Pixel Hall as security for any future loan facility. In return, they generously offered to lend me as much as I wanted at 10% over base.

Then it was all hands to the deck. My wife immediately began knitting patterns for packaging and Scroot was despatched to California to pick up some games licenses. My own job was to drum up a spot of interest in the home country, with a view to maximising sell-through and generating a perceived asset value for our brands portfolio (yes, that business course certainly came in useful).

At this stage, disaster struck when we received news that Scroot had died in San Francisco, apparently the innocent victim in a brawl over a bar of soap in a public bath house. All seemed lost when suddenly there arrived in the post a floppy disk, apparently posted by the hapless Scroot before her demise.

Inserting this into our newly acquired PC revealed it to be none other than a beta copy of Mutant Hero Ninja Cricketers – although to my disappointment this was a misprint, the heroes of the game actually being crickets, not cricketers. It didn't seem to make much difference to the game, however.

My wife's patterns now completed, I then took the plunge and ordered 100 pages of advertising in the computer press. My business course training really showed through here as I managed to 'barter' with the sales executives and get a very generous 1.5% discount off the rate card. We had agreed to supply film, so it was off to Simpkins' (we don't have a Boots in our village) for a roll of Kodachrome which we duly posted that afternoon.

Later that day I scored another remarkable success, cutting duplication costs dramatically following a very generous offer from the local computer club to carry out the necessary work at one of their 'social' evenings.

The big launch date was now looming rapidly. I booked a suite at the Savoy in London – a very proud moment for me, as it was there that my grandfather met my grandmother during a particularly enthusiastic celebration of the Wednesday Club. Invitations were sent to all the leading journalists, grog was ordered, and my wife's patterns were carefully packed up for the journey to London.

Oh how jubilant we were when we arrived in the big city. And how thrilled we were when, thanks again to my business training, I was able to strike a very tough bargain with the attendant press, who (after an embarrassingly large amount of grog, I must confess), very generously agreed to cover Cricketers in their magazines.

This heavy investment paid off and the next week we were flooded with dozens of orders from a French distributor, whom – business know-how again – I managed to knock down to a very generous 90 days credit for his 80% discount. And at the end of that week – oh glory! – we were top of the charts!

It is, however, with much regret that I have to announce that our total sales were only 48 copies. Pixel Hall, alas, must now be sold to satisfy the bank. The friendly executive who so happily accepted my bookings has become a ravening wolf, and my wife and I, alas, are undone. And yet, I have to say that I am deeply optimistic about the future for our new company, Fabulous Games 2 Ltd, which...

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HARD SELL

Here it is: the one and only hardware guide to give you COMPLETE details on the machines you're most likely to upgrade to, including that all-important criterion of software availability.

The ACE Hardware Guide comes in two sections: 16-bit upgrades (this month); and consoles (next month). Please note: we do our best to ensure that all information is correct and update the section regularly, but we cannot be held responsible for any errors.

ACORN ARCHIMEDES

Models: Archimedes 310, 3000, 410 420, 440
Package: keyboard, mouse and drive: keyboard mouse and drive plus monitor (colour or mono);
Memory: 3000 512K; 310 1Mb; 410 1Mb; 420 2Mb; 440 4Mb
Processor: Acorn ARM
RRP: Prices range from £789.97 for A3000 alone to £2644.60 for A440 with colour monitor
Contact: Acorn 0223 245200

IN BRIEF

Still the cutting edge of micro technology. Acorn's ARM is about the fastest thing this side of a Cray. This very exciting machine – although gathering admirers since the introduction of the A3000 – still lacks a good games software base and is best left to the enthusiast.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 256 or 640 x 256 with normal monitors. 640 x 512 available with multi-sync monitors.
Palette: 4096
Colours: From mono up to 256 (320 x 256) or 16 (640 x 512).
TV: No
Monitor Output: Mono composite video: colour – RGB + sync.
Monitor Supplied: Depends on package bought.
Monitor Options: Acorn dedicated 14 inch medium res. colour; 12 inch high res mono; Multi-sync colour.
Sprites: 1
Speed: Blistering.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good
MIDI: With extra hardware.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 16 channels (8 stereo pairs); 6 octaves, 1 internal speaker.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 800K
Disk Price: From £1.20 upwards.
Disk Performance: Good and fast.
Keyboard: 103 keys with programmable auto-repeat. Early keyboards have a cheap feel given the quality of the machine.
Joystick/Mouse: 3 button mouse; n support for joysticks.
Interfaces: 25 pin D parallel; 9 piN mouse; 3.5mm stereo headphone jack; 64 way din; 41612 expansion port; IEC 320 video outlet; I/O interface.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Still very limited. Some games available most software is for productivity and business.
Current Releases: See above.
Games: Most famous are *Zarch (Virus)* and *Conqueror*. But there have been several impressive one-off titles released recently.
Graphics: Potential is enormous. Some excellent packages available
Music: Like graphics, but developers remain shy.
Prospects: Limited. Even the cheaper models find it tough competing with STs and Amigas.
Software Loading: Very reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Still scarce, some 305 and 310s starting to appear but expect to pay for them.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to faulty machines dealer.

APPLE MACINTOSH

Models: Classic, SE/30, LC, IIsi
Package: Monitor with built-in CPU and disk drive, separate keyboard.
Memory: 1Mb (Classic 1), 2Mb (Classic 2, SE/30, LC & IIsi), 5Mb (IIsi)
Processor: Motorola 68000 (SE/30); 68020 (LC), 68030 (SE/30, IIsi)
Recommended Retail Price: Classic 1 £575; Classic 2 £895; SE/30 £2395+ (inc 40Mb hard disc); LC £1235 (inc 40Mb hard disc); IIsi £2295 (2Mb+ 40Mb hard disc); £2645 (5Mb+40Mb hard disc); £2995 (5Mb+80Mb) (all ex VAT)
Contact: Apple 081-569-1199

IN BRIEF

A very expensive up-market machine for those keen on desktop publishing, WIMP systems and top-of-the-range software. Release of the Classic range an exciting move for wannabe Mac owners. Software is very expensive. Quite a few games in the US, but few over here. Good for MIDI musicians but be prepared to pay through the nose for software.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Classic & SE 512 x 342; LC 640 x 480; IIsi 640 x 480 (colour) & 640 x 870 (grey).
Palette: Classic & SE are black and white; LC 256; IIsi 256 or 16 greys in max res.
Colours: 256 with colour monitor
TV: No
Monitor Output: Integral monitor.
Monitor Supplied: Yes
Monitor Options: Hi-res mono & colour available for LC & IIsi.
Sprites: None
Speed: Classic 1 okay; Classic 2, SE/30 & LC reasonably fast; IIsi very fast.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good
MIDI: Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: IIsi yes; rest no.
Performance: 4 channels give good performance.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 1.44Mb
Disk Price: £1.50 – £2.00
Disk Performance: Generally fast
Keyboard: Separate with 81 keys including function keys and numeric key pad. Optional extra is the Apple Extended keyboard with 105 keys.
Joystick/Mouse: Joystick is not supported; high-quality single button mouse is supplied with machine.
Interfaces: SE/30 – Apple Desktop Bus connector. 2 RS232/RS422 serial; external disk drive; 96-pin Euro-Din expansion slot; SCSI – DB-25 connector; external audio amplifier. IIsi – 2 RS232/RS422 serial; DB-25 SCSI T.

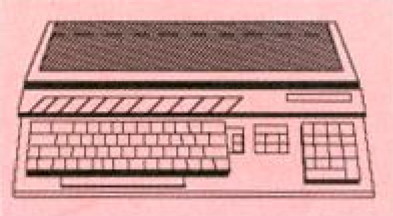
SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: A very wide base exists in all fields except games.
Current Releases: Adequate, though largely of US origin and in the business or DTP field.
Games: Very few arcade titles but plenty of icon driven adventures.
Graphics: Lots of interesting software for those interested in DIY publishing.
Music: Very well supported for MIDI software – but it's expensive to boot.
Prospects: As always, excellent – especially in business and DTP.
Software Loading: Quick and reliable.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Generally the RRP – Macs are only sold through dealerships. Ask for a discount for cash.
Second Hand Availability: Scarce and expensive. A better market exists in older models but these are best avoided.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Apple offers Applecare – "insurance" you take out to cover the cost of repairs after the guarantee has run out.

ATARI ST



Models: Atari 520STFM; 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs; Stacy
Package: 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Power Pack includes 520STE with light gun, joystick and £400 of "free" software. "Discovery" pack includes similar value software to Power pack but with an STFM and an educational bent.
Memory: 520STFM and 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb; Stacy 2 or 4Mb. STE machines expand internally to 4Mb.
Processor: Motorola 68000
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE (Power Pack) £399; 520STFM (Discovery Pack) £299; 1040STE £499; Stacy N/A
Contact: Atari 0753 33344

IN BRIEF

Excellent as a general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity. It's the number one choice for MIDI musicians. The ST's price still gives it a slight edge over the graphically more advanced Amiga. The new baby ST – Stacy – is tipped by Atari to be the musician's portable since it is a complete 2Mb or 4Mb ST with hard disk and mono monitor in a small box.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Low-res 320 x 200; medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
Palette: STFM 512; STE 4096; Stacy 2
Colours: Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
TV: Yes. Not Stacy.
Monitor Output: STFM models only, others through TV modulator
Monitor Supplied: No; Stacy has integral LCD monitor
Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
Sprites: 1
Speed: Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs. Blitter fitted to late STFMs (standard on STE) improves the GEM access.*

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: Yes
Stereo Output: STE only.
Performance: 3 channel sound is average to good depending on software. STE features 8 bit PCM sound but no current software uses it.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 720K
Disk Price: £1.20 to £1.50
Disk Performance: Reliable and fast. Early machines were supplied with a single-sided disk drive.
Keyboard: 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
Joystick/Mouse: 2 Joystick ports are standard; 2 button mouse is supplied with machine. Stacy is supplied with a trackball.

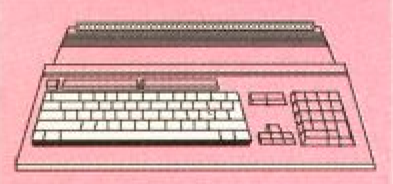
SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Excellent. A few budget titles are starting to appear now.
Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
Games: Across the board.
Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the ST has failed to capture a market in the States.
Software Loading: Several software companies now supply their games on one double-sided disc, often using the second side for extra graphics or sound, meaning single-sided disc owners either miss out on some of the frills, or even worse have to send off for two single-sided discs. The alternative two single-sided discs entail tedious disc swapping - which is equally annoying newer owners.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP. Watch out for the twice yearly bundles.
Second Hand Availability: Very common and quite cheap. STs do not hold their value well – beware very old, single sided machines.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty.

COMMODORE AMIGA



Models: Amiga A500; A1500; A2000; A3000
Package: A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A1500 and A2000 have separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
Memory: A500 512K; A1500 & A2000 1Mb; A3000
Processor: 500/1500/2000 Motorola 68000; A3000 68030, 16 or 25MHz
Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA; Screen Gems £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90s pack £579.99 (all packs inc A500); A1500 from £999; A2000 from £1199(for 1Mb+20Mb hard disk); A3000 from £3160(for 2Mb+40Mb hard disk). (All prices inc VAT).
Contact: Commodore 0628 770088

IN BRIEF

A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A1500 is near-identical spec-wise to the A2000, but cheaper. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes *Workbench 2*, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz/40Mb hard disk to a 25MHz/100Mb disc.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
Palette: 4096
Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
TV: With modulator.
Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome.
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: C1084 £349.99
Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
Speed: Very fast with good software.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.
Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8-bit digital sound into the four channels.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5inch – 837K; A3000 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
Disk Price: £1.20 – £2.00
Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
Joystick/Mouse: 2 button mouse supplied as standard.
Interfaces: Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A1500 & A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A1500, A2000 and A3000.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Similar to the ST.
Current Releases: Everyone's doing them.
Games: Something for everyone.
Graphics: Quality and range is unsurpassed.
Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
Prospects: Excellent.
Software Loading: Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
Maintenance: One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

IBM PC

Model: IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
Package: Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

IN BRIEF

Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/ST beating display; and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).
Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384; VGA 800 x 600.
Palette: CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64; VGA 256
Colours: CGA 4; EGA 16; VGA 64; Hercules 2
Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (E/VGA)
Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome display – check before buying.
Sprites: None
Speed: From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such Roland (£380) and Ad-Lib (£150) - which is fast becoming a standard - provide synthesiser-quali

ty sound through an amplifier.
MIDI: Third part interfaces available.
Stereo Output: With boards, yes.
Performance: Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 5.25in –180/360K/1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb
Disk Price: 60p – £3.00
Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.
Keyboard: Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it easier to use.
Joystick/Mouse: Neither supplied as standard. The better clones include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (*Windows*) has become more popular.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Vast!
Current Releases: All major software houses now produce something for the PC , with many now supporting the superior E/VGA modes.
Games: Most of the best Amiga /ST titles appear on the PC eventually.
Graphics: Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent. On a standard CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is.
Music: Unexpanded it's pathetic. However, add-on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on a home computer.
Prospects: The PC is the eternal champion – as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better equipment.
Software Loading: Fast and reliable; very fast from hard disk.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Watch out for package deals form large chains and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.
Second Hand Availability: Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard.
Maintenance: Usually one year's guarantee – but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fix the machine in-situ for free.

HARDWARE UPGRADE

You probably know our position in the great "Which should I buy: computer or console?" debate by now - if you can afford it get one of each, but if funds are limited (and let's face it - who's aren't?) then you're best to plump for a computer.

Each have their own strengths and weaknesses. While consoles are great for pure arcade games, computers have the edge for 3D sims or strategy games and have more all-round flexibility.

So which is the best computer to buy? In the final analysis, the choice is up to you, depending on what you want to from your machine and how much cash you can spend. For a good all-rounder you really can't go wrong with the Commodore Amiga.

But if you more interested in business than games then you'd be wiser to invest in a PC clone, while if you have a musical MIDI-bent then go for an Atari ST. You see? This is why we provide these specs - to let YOU decide what YOU need.

Console-wise we champion the Sega Megadrive - it's an amazingly powerful little beast with some stunning arcade-quality games, and it's fully software and hardware supported by the giant Virgin Mastertronic label, so there's little likelihood of releases drying up in the near future.

But there's a new kid on the block...

Nintendo's Super Famicom has been creating waves wherever it's been seen, with some incredible games already available for it (though by some we mean barely a handful). While it's undoubtedly more powerful than the Megadrive for raw sprite trickery, how does this weigh up against the fact that the console is only available on grey import at the moment, with the consequently higher hardware and software prices?

Next month's console half of *Hard Sell* will include full specs for the Famicom, so that you can compare it's performance against the other major console contenders and decide for yourself whether it's worth the dosh. Be there!

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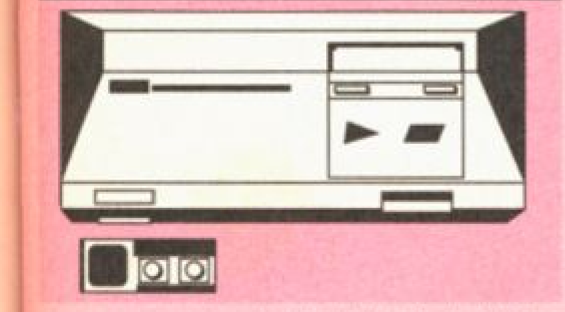

Moonwalker, which I had a brief look at last month, is now available. Potential Master System buyers - wise people! - may be interested to know that if they go for the Master System+ pack (retailing for just under £100), they'll not only bundle in a copy of the *Moonwalker* game, but a video of the Michael Jackson film as well!

Okay, so the film may not be much cop, but it's got some nice SFX and you can't grumble when it's free, can you? Can you? The preview packaging I saw seemed to suggest that the game and video bundle are likely to be on sale seperate from the System pack soon. At the time of writing Virgin Mastertronic didn't know how much the bundle would retail for, though it seems likely that it'll be around the price of a stand alone cartridge, effectively giving you the video for free.

THE CYBER SHINOBI

So onto the new games. First off there's *The Cyber Shinobi*, or *Shinobi Part 2* as the title screen has it (though what that makes *Shadow Dancer*, which I thought was the *Shinobi* sequel, is anybody's guess). The action takes place on six jerky multiway-scrolling levels. You have to kick and slash your way through hordes of maniac Zeed killers. By collecting power-ups you can improve the effectiveness of your sword and accumulate Ninjitsu power, which acts like a variable strength smart bomb. The action is non-stop but very tough, and some of the collision detection is a bit iffy. Fans of the original should enjoy this, but others may want to look elsewhere for their 'kicks'.

SUBMARINE ATTACK

Balderia is under attack from the dread underwater monstrosity, the Meta-creature. Only one man, Admiral Mikan, and his submarine can save them. This titanic struggle between good and evil is depicted as a right-to-left scrolling shoot-'em-up, with the usual power-ups and end-of-level baddies (which are pretty unimpressive and easy to kill). The game's fun, with some nicely drawn backgrounds, but a little easy - it shouldn't take the average player long to see all six levels.

DANAN - THE JUNGLE FIGHTER

Undoubtedly the best of the batch is *Danan*, a bash 'n' bounce brawl through four huge levels of scrolling jungles and castles. The sprites are large, the action is hot and the tasks are big and varied, with some exciting end-of-level clashes. I liked it - it reminded me a lot of the old arcade favourite *Rastan*! The only negative aspect is the way the screen 'flick' scrolls vertically, but it doesn't really affect play. And don't think four levels aren't that many - they're tough enough to keep even the best player going for a long, long while!

All three carts cost £29.99, and should be on the shelves of your local Sega dealer now.

● David Upchurch

MEGADRIVE

No sooner have Electronic Arts unveiled the wonderful *John Madden's Football*, than the US branch of Sega announce...

JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL

JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL
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SEGA

According to the Sega press release this is the 'much anticipated ultimate sports video game designed by the four-time Super Bowl winner. It features 48 of Joe's unique plays and calls, as well as his special comments and advice on the 16 opponent teams you get to choose from. You control whether the pass is a bullet or a lob, whether it's a short, flat or long arcing bomb going for the endzone. You control individual players as they dive for passes and extra yardage. On screen, watch the "Joe Cam" as Joe passes or gives you the high sign for a great play. Feel the energy of what it's like to be a football hero!'. This is all well and good, but how does it play? Guess we'll have to wait and see. Released in January in the US, you can expect to see it on import any time now.

This trend of licensing big US sports celebs for these sports sims seems to show no signs of slacking off. Future sports games include *Pat Riley Basketball* and *James 'Buster' Douglas Knockout Boxing*.

GEAR GOSSIP

Joe Montana Football is also due to appear on Sega's colour handheld GameGear. The portable console comes bundled with the *Columns* arcade puzzle game, and other titles due to be available in time for the machines launch include *Super Monaco GP* (previewed in ACE Issue 39), *G-Loc*, *Shinobi* and *Golf*. Sega anticipate that in all there will be at least 20 games available for the GameGear by the end of 1991.

According to Sega, the GameGear has sold over 40,000 units in its first two days of being on sale in Japan, and after one month of availability the backorders already exceed 600,000 units. Pretty impressive figures, eh?

LICENCE TO THRILL

Sega have several new third-party licensees writing games for the Megadrive. One of them, Taito, looks set to release at least one title that'll really push the Megadrive to the limits of its technical abilities. Of course, I'm talking about *Space Invaders '91*. Bet you can't wait to get you mitts on that one - I know I can't! Slightly more interesting is *Rastan Saga II* (the follow-up to the coin-op scrolling hack n' slash). Also due for release is *Sagaia* - though I've no idea what that's about.

Our very own Virgin Mastertronic are due to bring out the conversion of Core's adventure classic *Corporation*, while Mirrorsoft are developing *Predator II* and converting *Speedball I*. As yet there are no firm release details for any of the above.

SEGA SIM SENSATIONS

One of the biggest arguments against buying a console is that you can't play in-depth simulation games on them. Well, this complaint should soon be a thing of the past with the release of *688 Attack Sub* and *Abrams Battle Tank*.

In *688 Attack Sub* you get to play the commanding officer of a modern nuclear sub. Taking on 18 missions from around the world, players can monitor the sounds and patterns of sonar, hug the ocean floor and have the submariners actually speak in English and Russian. True 3D imaging of the ocean floor gives you a real sense of a submarine enviroment (it says here). Sounds pretty good fun for those wanting to pretend to be Sean Connery in *The Hunt For Red October*.

Abrams Battle Tank is set in World War II and allows you to play a tank commander fighting 8 missions against the Soviets (don't they mean Nazis?). All the action is depicted in realistic 3D. According to the press release, the action is so real, you can almost smell the missile smoke.

Both games are due for release in July in the States, so we should see them soon after.

● David Upchurch

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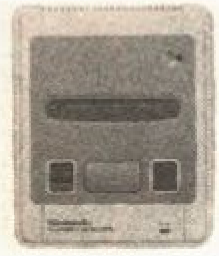
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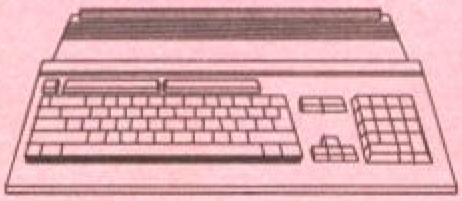
AMIGA



Budget software has always been a bit of a curate's egg. Until recently, the major players in the market have been skirting around the Budget market without necessarily committing. Sure, most companies have thrown out a few re-releases, but there's been a certain amount of reluctance to take the bull by the horns.

Virgin Mastertronic, however, have taken a very different view of the Amiga Budget scene and have launched into the market with a handful of critically acclaimed titles. Admittedly from their own back catalogue, the games cater for virtually every style of gamer. The Infocom adventures, once £40 giants available to a select few PC owners can now be enjoyed on the Amiga for a mere £7.

LOVE 'ER IN LEATHER

The Infocom range presents adventurers with a wide range of plotlines. There's *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, for example, offering players a comic-book style romp through a game populated by domineering Space Amazons. The action can get pretty steamy, and you can even select the level of sauciness in the descriptions of each scene and action. (The original game featured a scratch and sniff card, perhaps thankfully omitted from the budget version).

SMOOTH AS *SILKWORM*

Arcade fanatics can find all the blasting they could possibly want in three of the best games to appear on the Amiga in recent years, all now available at this knock-down rate. *Silkworm*, from the Sales Curve features excellent two-player action. One player controls a jeep and the other a helicopter in a left-to-right scrolling blast. You're attacked by wave after wave of enemy craft, some forming into enormous flying fortresses in the air!

IT'S A GAS

Xenon, from the Bitmap Bros was rated by many magazines as their game of the month when it first appeared in 1987. Unlike many other shoot-em-ups, *Xenon* enables the player to change from an airborne space-fighter into a ground-going battle tank. Each faces particular obstacles and can be powered-up to a super-craft. Perhaps a little slow by today's frenetic standards, *Xenon* was a genuine breakthrough at the time and should be part of every discerning Amiga owner's catalogue.

So, it makes a nice change for Amiga owners perhaps second in line to PC gamers in the most-expensive software stakes, to be able to play decent games and still have change from a tenner. Good job.

VIDEO VIEW

Ever wished you could harness the power of your Amiga and put it to good use for uses other than games? More and more hardware and utilities packages are emerging recently.

It's important to distinguish between *useful* packages which actually have some benefit based in realistic entertainment purposes rather than glorified science kits which measure the moisture levels in your daffodils' earth.

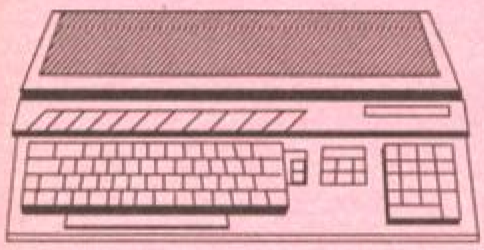
Video Editing systems area prime example of the former type. Using Amiga systems you can now edit, caption and title your own video productions. So, instead of having to write the title of the program on the box and include the rubbishy BBC2 announcement so you can tell what's on the tape, you can produce a menu screen cataloguing what's on the tape, at what counter position.

Those brave enough to create their own video masterpieces, can add that professional touch touch with decent lead-ins. Your holiday in Marbella can now be properly announced thanks to your Amiga.

Once particularly decent piece of kit for producing titles is the Videostudio from ZVP. It enables you to produce 3D animated titles to a pretty professional standard.

● Jim Douglas

ATARI ST



It's hard to keep up with Microdeal's outpouring of music products for the ST; it seems that you've just finished reviewing one sampler or music arranger when there's another one on the market.

The latest releases are ***Quartet V1.5***, an update of the 4-channel "sample sequencer", and ***Playback,*** a sound output cartridge which gives the ST, STF and STFM the stereo capabilities of the STE.

Quartet V1.5 is a must-have if you lament the ST's musical inferiority when compared to the Amiga. At the normal price of £49.95 it's reasonable, but at the introductory offer price of £24.95 it's unmissable.

Running on any ST without the need for additional hardware, it's very much intended to give the ST the same sort of sample-sequencing abilities as the Amiga, offering four sampled voices (which can be chosen from the 100-sound library provided, or imported from Microdeal's Replay or other popular samplers).

Since the samples are replayed at up to 16Khz, quality is good; you can listen to the sounds through a TV, monitor, or ideally a Replay cartridge. Sample processing software lets you loop, filter or repeat samples before adding them to the 20-voice library which is available for each Quartet composition (these can be saved as Voice Sets).

Quartet's main display has a conventional musical stave on which you can enter notes by selecting their value from a menu box, clicking on the required screen position, and sliding to the correct pitch. This is a tedious and repetitive process, but you can enter notes much faster directly from a MIDI keyboard.

You can test the music for an individual voice or for the whole composition, and once you have the basic composition laid down, you can add to it by inserting voice change messages, loop points (which can be "nested" up to 100 times so you have loops within loops), note links, slides, transpositions and so on.

The results can sound very professional with a little patience, and the package includes routines which allow you to include Quartet compositions in your own programs written in assembler, Basic or C, so Quartet is just as suitable as a development tool as it is for mucking around entertaining yourself!

Version 1.5 allows STE owners to output through the stereo ports simply by pressing F5. Voices 1 and 2 go through the left channel, voices 3 and 4 through the right. For ST, STF and STFM owners, pressing F4 will route output through the Playback stereo cartridge. Â If you already have Quartet V1, you can upgrade to the double-sided V1.5 disk, which includes the new program, more demo music and samples, for £3. If you want to upgrade to the new versions of all three Quartet disks, which again have extra demos and samples on side 2, it will cost £6 - and don't forget to return your original disks to Microdeal.

The other new product, Playback, is an unassuming-looking grey box which plugs into the cartridge port, and has two phono socket outputs which allow you to connect it to an external amplifier. It's compatible with ***Quartet, Replay VIII, Replay Professional*** and ***MasterSound II*** software, adding stereo capability to what were mono samplers. But remember it's not a sampler itself; if you want to digitise your own sounds, you have to have one of Microdeal's other hardware samplers.

Normal price is £29.95, but again there's an introductory offer price of £19.95. Even at this low price you might not think it worth the bother, but the Playback package also includes Drumbeat, a sophisticated 2-channel drum sequencer program which allows "kits" of up to 15 samples to be assembled. Up to 50 drum patterns can be composed and held in memory at once, then assembled into 10 songs, each of up to 99 steps. You can alter timing values and insert triplets, and control tempo internally or from an external MIDI clock, which makes Drumbeat a good alternative to a cheap MIDI drum machine.

In the package you also get a ***Quartet Demo Driver,*** which allows you to combine your own Quartet compositions, graphic displays and scrolling messages (in colour or hi-res mono modes). Lastly, the package includes stereo output drivers written in HiSoft Basic, GFA Basic, STOS and machine code, so you can incorporate stereo sound in your own programs.

Since Microdeal are encouraging ST software developers to make their programs Playback compatible, and public domain libraries are supporting Quartet with additional tunes and samples, it looks as if nothing can stop Microdeal's domination of the ST amateur music market. Well played!

Microdeal, PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4YB,
Tel. 0726 68020.

●Chris Jenkins

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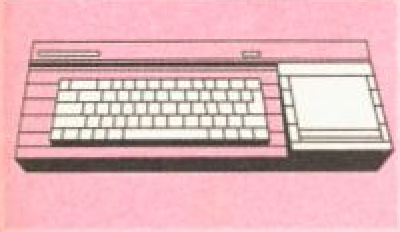

With very little original home-grown software on the Spectrum market at the moment it's a (mixed) blessing that there are some software houses out in the big world that don't necessarily rely upon big film licences, coin op conversions or named products (like *Lotus*) to sell the game. There have been few, original products released in last few months and it has actually taken Infogrames, the French software house, to come up with two of the best original products namely, North & South an arcade strategy game (no, honest it's good!), and my personal favourite, Light Corridor - a simple yet highly addictive bat and maze game. As original products go, they both deserve to wipe the board with anything that our own British developers can come up with but time, (and the marketing machine), will tell. Until then, here's a round up of the best games to be buying this month.

LIGHT CORRIDOR

It's cool, it's groovy, it's a sort of 3-D bat and ball game, and you have to smack the ball down an irregularly shaped corridor and move the bat down after it. Sounds a bit dull, a bit samey? No way! The nearest thing to it was *Room 10* but Inforgrames' *Light Corridor's* so much better. There are various pick ups to collect as you wind along after the ball, that give you extra lives, a sticky bat, double bats, large and small and even a homing bat which takes all of the effort out of the game for a while.

NORTH & SOUTH

North and South, also from Infogrammes is a strategy arcade game that puts you in of an American soldier during the Civil War playing either against another player or the computer. You must fight to vanquish either the Confederates or Yankies) starting at any year bewteen 1861 and 1864 with whichever starting point chosen showing you the correct historical state of the battle at that time.

An extensive front-end menu gives you three difficulty levels to select for each player and three icons give a triad of optional dissaster scenarios; Indians which may attack at any time, storms which stop all fighting in their vacinity and European reinforcements which are dropped off to whichever side happens to own South Virgina. North and South is a great game that will covering options for both arcadersters and level-headed deep thinking strategists alike.

COMING UP SOON (Fnar!)

For all you VIZ fans out there, Virgin will be shocking your socks off soon with their *Viz* game. The game itself is straight forward enough - a less-than-dynamic race between Johnny Fartpants, Biffa Bacon and Buster Gonad but where the game will really score (fnar, fnar!) is in the shocking graphics. It's not really the colours either but more the outrageous humour that is the Viz characters. There are various bonus stages that are just out to shock! My personal favourite is where you must wiggle your joystick (scchhfffnart!) to get Johnny Fartpants to blow up balloons with his botty brew and then release them when full and before they blow up and cause him ring-stinging agonies. It's really funny to watch, but remember kids, that Johnny is a professional and you shouldn't try any of his tricks in the comfort of your own home. (Especially if the windows are closed!)

TIPS

With all you dedicated game players out there, it should come as no suprise to you to find that we've been snowed under with tips and hints so here's the pick of the crop!

TURTLES

Yes, the fab four can finally be bested without having to take recourse to large pizzas with a hold on the anchovies....here's how to get the Turtles cookin'.

Infinite Energy

If you really don't fancy dying at all then use this cheat. Press the keys 1, 2, 3, A, X, C, V and the cursor that points right and bingo! Infinite energy.

Turtles' Technodrome Level

On the Technodrome level of the game, there is a Guardian which you can easily kill by doing the following: Stand where the *cross* is and the bullets from the eye cannot hit you and when you have to fight Shredder, don't jump after him, just stand on the ledge and when he comes anywhere near you just shoot him. Just carry this on until he dies.

NARC

Ocean's drug-bustin' release Narc has got a few people baffled so here's how to get past those hard-dealin' dudes. Define your control keys as G,R,U,T,S and then just use anything as jump. If you do it correctly then you should get "Hello Cheeky" under above the word *NARC* and above the player one controls. Now you can choose your prefered playing controls and start the game as normal with infinite lives.

●Garth Sumpter

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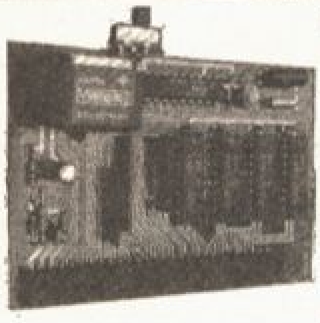

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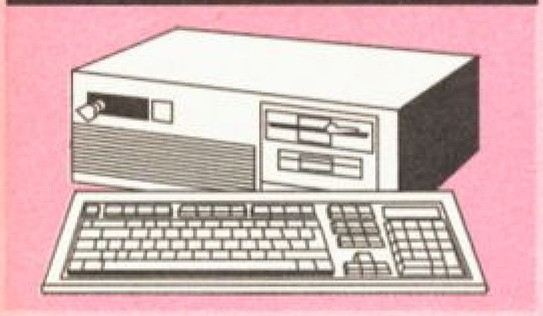

PC games seem to be going through a bit of a change of late. Finally software houses are facing up to the limitations of the PC and being a little bit more careful what games they endeavour to offer the increasingly selective audience. Most PC owners (and softcos) have had their fingers burnt once or twice. The lure of an easy conversion to a popular format has proved too much for some and cronky games appeared.

The point, obviously, is that the PC isn't a sprite engine, and was never intended to be used as one. It's the number crunching capability of the machine which makes the PC an unbeatable polygon-driven games machine. Sims and adventures too work far better.

The style of PC games is at last settling down. Companies know what they can get away with and are keeping within the bounds or reality.

A particularly excellent PC game of the moment is ***Life and Death II - The Brain.*** Look out for a full review in the next issue.

WORRYING TRENDS

American PC developers have been making worrying noises of late regarding their perception of an 'entry level' machine.

According to well-informed sources, the US developers regard a 12Mhz VGA 286 as an absolute bare-bones system, and they're planning to stop catering for machines below this level.

If you haven't got a hard drive, you might as well leave the room now.

While this is all very fine for owners of expensive PCs with these capabilities or higher, it's far from cheering for the multitude of PC gamers who bought a basic machine for non-entertainment home use.

This situation can be argued from two angles. Either you can take the viewpoint that if the quality of PC software is to improve, the user-base must be dragged up with it, and "educated" into buying swifter, more capable machines. Imagine the situation we'd all be in if people had continued to write games for the 16k Spectrum because they didn't want to upset or alienate the userbase for the sake of luring some show-off 48K owners.

After all, how would Amiga owners feel if it were announced that Ocean and US Gold were to suddenly cease publishing all games except on the Amiga 3000? Not entirely happy, I should expect.

Of course, these points are reasonable, but the argument is little flawed. PC gaming in Britain is undoubtedly a growing field. However, it's extremely new, and shutting down avenues of entertainment for the great number of PC owners will hamstring development in the future.

It's unreasonable to expect every graphics card, every sound set-up and every speed of machine to be catered for. But it *isn't* unreasonable to expect to be catered for without owning the top-of-the-range machine.

Since more PC software originates in the States than anywhere else, these developments are to be taken seriously. What do you think? Should software be produced to stretch the best available PCs or to cater for the majority? Write in to:

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TIPS TIPS TIPS

Where are they? If ever there was a machine ripe for depthy gaming tips, as well as all those answers to niggly problems like disk formats, best storage programs, the PC is. So, for goodness sake, start writing, and let all the PC owners around the UK (and beyond) be a party to your hints and tips!

HOT GAMES

The best games available for the PC this month are still; Rise of the Dragon from Sierra, Prince of Persia from Domark and Life and Death II- The Brain.

●Jim Douglas

C64

There has been a great deal of debate recently over the games mostdeserving of the title; Best 64 Game ever. And so, in order to put the record straight; here's a list of the finest games on the Commodore 64. All the games listed here can be obtained from one source or another. If you see one in particular that takes your fancy but is tricky to get hold of, try the mail-order advertisers! Ready, steady go!

1) **Head Over Heels** (Ocean)
It'll take ages to complete this fantastic arcade adventure! This is possibly the finest example of 3D isometrics ever seen on the 64!

2) **Barbarian** (Palace)
Palace's simulation of movie-style swords and sorcery combat features excellent animation and true gore. *The Way of the Exploding Fist* of swordfighting.

3) **The Sentinel** (Firebird)
A far-out, long haired and thoroughly hippified game if ever there was one. It's all polygon driven and thoroughly odd. Save the planet from bizarre alien forces.

4) **Zolyx** (Silverbird)
Anyone who remembers the arcade great *Qix* will fall head over heels for this one. Top quality arcade action.

5) **World Class Leaderboard** (Access)
Certainly the best golf game of all time.

6) **International Karate +** (System 3)
Following FIst, IK+ took the throne of "Finest violent encounter on the 64" And it has remained there ever since!

7) **Defender of the Crown** (Cinemaware)
Only available for disk users only, unfortunately. This hit from Cinemaware chronicles mythical times of knights and honour and magic. Anyone with a passing interest in the genre will be captivated by the graphics and music of the game.

8) **California Games** (Epyx)
Sports compilations have equal chances of dazzling or disappointing, but the sheer number of events presented in this sun-scorched offering make it a sure-fire winner from the word go.

9) **Paradroid** (Hewson)
Andrew Braybrook's "debut", Gribbly's Day Out was clever, but Paradroid's innovative, tense shoot-em-up was absolutely stunning.

10) **Bounty Bob** (US Gold)
With Miner 2049er, Bill Hogue arguably pioneered the style of the platform and ladders game. This sequel to the trailblazer has lots of added features.

11) **Park Patrol** (Activision)
Activision used to be the most consistent producer of original and playable software. It released all manner of products from original games like Little Computer People and Park Patrol.

12) **Ancipital** (Llamasoft)
From the man with the Long Hair, this shoot-em-up come arcade adventure is a true great. It's got strange but compulsive gameplay, weird gravity, weird sprites and even a Phil Collins drum emulator. Phew!

13) **Boulderdash** (First Star)
What a debut from Peter Leipa and Chris Gray (who was only a wee bairn at the time). Many many different ways of playing and solving the problems make Boulderdash a must.

Send your top 10 64 Games to the ACELINES section at the normal place!

●Jim Douglas

AMSTRAD CPC

The major electrical chainstores, such as Dixons and Comet, have been making huge price cuts on the Amstrad Plus and GX4000 systems following Xmas. Those who have a hunt around can save £20 on the excellent console (bringing the price down to just £79.95) and save £50 on the Plus range (bringing a 6128 Plus with colour monitor down to a more reasonable £375.95). Remember that these price cuts are NOT official changes to the RRP, although Amstrad did increase dealer profit margins, making it possible for these price cuts to occur.

Although these price cuts may be seen by some as a move of desperation following the poor sales at Xmas, I myself see them as inevitabel and wise business decisions. The Plus range of computers, although good machines, face tough competition at such a price - a price at which many people expect to buy the more glamorous and vogue-ish 16-bit computers (although without monitors, admittedly).

The console scene is even more war-torn. Nintendo and Sega slug it out for the lion's share of the market and between them achieve the majority of sales due to the prominence of their brand names and the high quality of a lot of their software. The GX4000 is, in my opinion, by far the more technically impressive of the consoles on offer at the sub-£100 price. What it seriously lacks is decent software - once the good games start appearing, the machine will really start selling. This newly-announced price decrease can't but help consumers choose the GX4000 depite its current lack of software, which in turn will lead to more software houses producing games. This price cut is basically the kickstart to the GX4000 console market that Amstrad needs.

CONSOLE CONSOLATION

So what can the GX4000 buyer hope to see on the shelves of his local software store? Well, *Robocop 2*, *Fire & Forget II*, *Batman - The Movie*, *Operation Thunderbolt*, *Switchblade* and *Crazy Cars II* should finally be available, although there's still no sign of those myriad other titles promised before Xmas. Come on, Amstrad!!

NOT A SOARWAY STUNNA

I suppose it was inevitable. The ST and Amiga versions of Domark's *S.T.U.N. Runner* were awful - not through any fault of the programmers but just due to the fact that there's is no way that even those 16-bit pixel pushers could shift the sort of 3D-graphics as generated by the coin-op. So it would be a miracle if the humble Amstrad version were any good. And let's face it, miracles are pretty thin on the ground...

So what's the game about? Basically you've got to beat the clock on a race through a winding series of tunnels and runways. Maximum speed is achieved by hugging to the outer-curve of the tunnels. There are obstacles to avoid, but no other vehicles race against you. Errrm.... that's about it.

This lack of any competition is the real crux of *S.T.U.N. Runners* problem. Without the original's colour and speed there's nothing to keep you hooked. Sure, the Amstrad tries hard, but it's all in vain. Unfortunately, *S.T.U.N. Runner* is one of those conversions that should never have been attempted.

BUDGET BRIEFING

Out on the Mastertronic Plus label for a mere £2.99 are several ageing classics form Virgin's back catalogue. Of special note are *Xenon* and *Silkworm* - both supremely playable and addicitive shoot-'em-ups that are an absolute steal at this price. Well recommended.

That's all for this month. Next month should see the round-up of the fanzines requested last time. Bye!

● David Upchurch

GAMEBOY

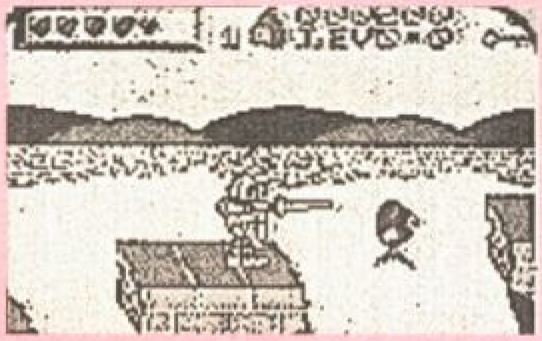
The number of new Game-boy releases continues. My current favourite is *Contra* from Konami - it's a stunningly playable and fast scrolling run n' shoot *Gryzor* variant. I highly recommend it - but be warned that it's not for the faint hearted.

Okay, okay, enough of the plugs! This month I want to give you a brief run-down on four of the exciting games that American-based Acclaim have got coming out in the States now and in the future. There should be available from your local console importer's shop soon after their US release.

THE PUNISHER

This title is based on the ultra-violent exploits of Marvel's most popular comic character. Apparently over 7 million blood-thirsty little American brats feast their eye's on the gory antics of *The Punisher* every month, as he wages his one-man war against crime. Their are no details as yet as to how the game plays or even what the aim is because it's still being programmed, but apparently it guest stars several other Marvel super-heroes, including The Amazing SpiderMan, and you can be pretty sure it'll be at least partly shoot-'em-up based.

WIZARDS & WARRIORS X: FORTRESS OF FEAR



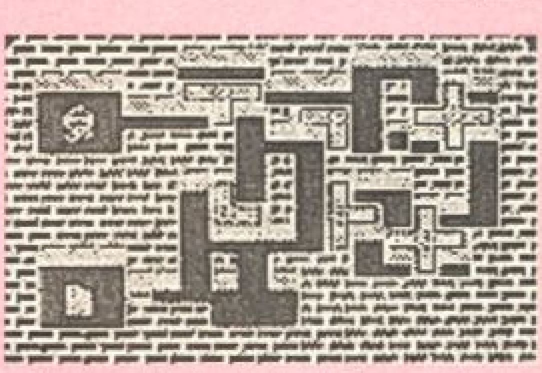
Oooh, spooky! Originally appearing on the Nintendo Entertainment System, this game features the on-going adventures of the brave Kuros as he battles deadly bats and slithering serpent beasts, amongst other vile creatures. The battle is depicted as a scrolling platform slash-'em-up set over several levels.

The previous games in this series won several awards, so with any luck this Gameboy incarnation should be equally as good.

KWIRK

Kwirk is a cuddly little shades-wearing guy who has to be guided through hundred of mazes in a tough time limit. Each maze takes the form of a puzzle with rotating gates that have to be positioned the correct way to allow him to progress.

Using the ability to link up Gameboys you and



a friend can play head-to-head. The game also features multiple skill levels so it should appeal to everyone from the baby through to grandma.

THE SIMPSONS

Yes! There's no escape from this latest cartoon craze - even in the Pinks. Once it was the Turtles, now it's the Simpsons. Again, very little I can tell you at this stage apart from the scenario - the game is still deep in the darkest depths of programming hell.

Bart and Lisa were looking forward to a relaxing summer vacation. But their dad Homer has other ideas - he's booked them into Sleepaway Summer Camp - also known as the Camp of No Return! It's up to you to try and save them from a fate worse than home. More news as and when I get it.

That's about it for this month - sorry, no room for tips! If you have any, then send them in to here - I'm always pleased to hear from readers.

● David Upchurch

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PC ENGINE

Welcome again to this months column dedicated to the P.C. Engine. This month I decided to bring you some tips for some of the most popular Engine games: Devil Crash is the best pinball game about and if you're finding it a bit hard here's how to get unlimited balls. Use the password: AAAAAAHAAA.

Klax is the Engine variant of Tetris (v. addictive) and here's how to flip through the game screens: Hold down button II, up, Select and Run at the same time, and to get to the music screen do it twice.

Bloody Wolf is showing its age but is still one of the best Engine games ever. Here's how to select your starting level: On the title screen press these button in order. II,I,I,II,I,II,II,I. Now press Up to go to level 1. Diagonal Up and Right for level 2. Right for 3 and so on. If you're still finding it hard infinite continues can be obtained by pushing Up followed by I, Down, II, Left, I, Right, followed by II. A sound will confirm the cheat has been activated.

GunHed was and still is very overrated. The music is brill though. You can get into the music test mode by switching the machine on and then quickly moving the joypad Left and Right very fast, for about 20 seconds (takes practice).

A few months ago I mentioned Dungeon Explorer. Here's the codes from Keon Man for his character Harmet.

1 IMGAJ-MDPAI
2 IDGNG-DMMNI
3 IDJLJ-DJHKC
4 IMJLG-MGEHC
5 IFHJI-NHHFC
6 IJIGI-COIFO
7 IEPAP-FMBPE
8 IBAHA-FDCCE
9 IEKHP-PIJLM
10 IBFKF-PCKGM
11 IOAMA-FHBBG
12 IDAGA-FPEBC
13 IMPOA-FPHMC

Remember if you have any comments or tips write to me Gareth Harper, ACE Lines, C/o ACE.+usual address.
Here are my top five P.C. Engine games available at the minute.

1 Bomber Man : Brilliant Bombuzal type game in which you try and blow up every on the in the screen. Amazing with 5 players all trying to blow each other up, while avoiding the nasties.

2 SCI (Chase HQ II) : Nancy and the boys from Chase HQ are back, causing mayhem on the motorway. The game ports over nicely from the arcade and for fans of the original it's a must.

3 Devil Crash : Months after it's release and I still love it. The definitive pinball game available. Even better than most pinball tables.

4 Jackie Chan : KungFu action on this latest game. Jackie is a large sprite which has a variety of moves available. A great platform type game, which is reminiscent of Chan+Chan.

5 Outrun : A massive hit in the arcades and now a massive hit on the Engine already, only a few weeks after its release, and it's easy to see why.

Also recommended are Aero Blaster which is a brill shoot em up with excellent graphics and variety. A must buy for all shoot em up freaks. I also recommend Cadish. I told you about this game last month. More details are that it scrolls from left to right and you can take your pick of several characters each with their own strength and weakness.The game it's self is a Gauntlet style quest, in which you can get hints from natives. Unfortunately these hints are in Japanese. Again this month I recommend that you buy Tatio's Championship Wrestling. A great game with lots of moves and great gameplay. Many thanks to Console Quest (0903)63786 for a lend of the games.

There has been very little to talk about on the Engine front this month. The releases have started to slow down a little. The next big games are going to be Strider and Parasol Stars. Strider was planed to be released as a duel card (compatible with both plain Engines and Super Grafx) but now it has been changed to just normal Engines. This will come as a shock to all the Super Grafx owners. The last games for their technically superior machine were Super Darius and Ghouls and Ghosts. They were all expecting Strider to be released specially for their machine. This raises the question, why did NEC release the Super Grafx? Was it just to get more money (remember the machine is more expensive), or have they got something special planned like the Power Console, which is a multi purpose cockpit type control console? Back to Parasol Stars. Taito are reported to be going out of the way to promote this game when it comes out, but will it be worth the wait?

●Gareth Harper

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SD	521	Star Wars Demo	Great sound and animation from the film
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ED	011	Fantasia STE	Simply the best solid 3D demo on the STE
ST GAMES (All disks are single sided and 1/2 meg unless otherwise stated)			
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ACE 04/91

HOT OFF THE SHELF

Easter. Okay, so you've got plenty of choccy eggs, but there's got to be more to life, yeah? You're right, there's the ACE *Hot of the Shelf* software list, which can point you in the correct direction for a classic bit of games software.

This month, for the very first time, we've included the top games over the last three months from both computer AND console - including the truly wonderful Nintendo Super Famicom.

AWESOME

Psygnosis ● Amiga £34.99
A shoot-'em-up where you'll need to master four different gameplay styles if you're to survive. The first is similar to *Asteroids*, except that here your ship stays stationary and the aliens and rocks rotate about you. Next is a *Space Harrier*-like battle against a giant space dragon. After that you pilot your ship over the multi-directional parallax scrolling surface of an alien world, shooting aliens and searching for the landing bay. The final style is a *Gauntlet*-style run around the starbase looking for the entrance to the space station. The graphics for all sections wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. A stunning game, if a little derivative, and well worth its ACE rating.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99
Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping , a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A good purchase for jaded Chess fans.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BATTLE COMMAND

Ocean ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST ● PC £29.99
The latest solid-polygon epic from Realtime. You control a Mauler tank through 16 tough missions, varying from straightforward seek and destroy to escorting a convoy of supply trucks to picking up a downed satellite in enemy territory. Although the accent is on action, several of the missions require quite a bit of thought to complete. During your travels you'll encounter a wide variety of enemy craft, all rendered in exceptionally fast 3D. A little more originality, next time okay?

★ ACE RATING 899 ON AMIGA AND ATARI ST

BOULDERDASH

Victor Musical Industries ● Gameboy 3400 Yen
Yet another steal from the C64 catalogue of great games. Hey kids, remember this? Guide cute and cuddly Rockford around umpteen mazes of boulders and meanies in pursuit of diamonds. But bear in mind that digging around boulders can make them tumble down on your head! An arcade puzzle game of the most addictive kind and yet another game ideally suited to the B&W handheld wonder.

★ ACE RATING 908 ON GAMEBOY

CAPTIVE

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £24.99 ● PC £29.99
Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. *Captive*, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place *Captive* very much in the ACE-rated category.

★ ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ● Amiga £29.99 ● PC £39.99
A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launca year ago, and now released on the ST and Amiga. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that be whispered about) Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge scenarios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99
This violent clash between two solid-polygon generated pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, with a huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're to become World Champ!

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS DRIVING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST ● PC £24.99
A 3D polygon racing game - and arguably the best yet, providing far more depth than its nearest rival, *Indy 500* though how it compares to *Hard Drivin' 2* has

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yet to be seen. Can be played against the clock or against another driver, in which case each designs a course, trying to exploit the weaknesses of the other player (i.e. fear of heights!). Both drivers then race on the two tracks. Spectacular wins and crashes can be viewed from any angle in the playback option. A successful mix of simulation and knock-about fun.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

Nothing new in the plot department, unfortunately. Old wizard...enter dungeon...defeat monsters...avoid traps...solve puzzles...rescue Grand Wizard...etc,etc. However, the presentation is something else. An isometric-3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. **WARNING!** - this program only works on 1Mb machines!

★ ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST

IVAN 'IRONMAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD

Virgin/Mastertronic ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £10.99cs/£14.99dk

A hugely enjoyable rollicking romp through 8 courses of rough 'n' tumble driving action, viewed in the overhead style championed by Atari's *Super Sprint*. All boy racers should look no further. Another stunning game from the consistently excellent Graftgold, authors of *Simulcra* and *Paradroid 90*.

★ ACE RATING 870 ON IBM PC

JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts ● Megadrive £39.99

What a game! The definitive US footy game yet available on any home system. The graphics are superbly realistic - as is the gameplay - and the excitement is non-stop. The sampled grunts and groans add to the action. If you're a Megadrive owner then you'd be a mug to miss this. Set out for your software shop right now!

★ ACE RATING 904 ON SEGA MD

KINGS QUEST V

Sierra ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● IBM PC £39.99(EGA), £44.99(VGA)

The latest in the popular series, and typing is now a thing of the past because all interaction is via a series of multiple-choice menus. You have to guide King Graham of Daventry through yet another fantasy land in search of his castle, kidnapped by the wicked magician Mordack. However, the messages are sickeningly cute at times, and those with a low sweetness threshold may choke on *KQ5*. Others should enjoy this romp through 9.7 Mb of excellent animated graphic adventure.

★ ACE RATING 850 ON IBM PC

MYTH

System 3 ● 8-bit formats £8.99cs/£14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been pushed before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of its size but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability. The nearest 8-bit games have come to 16-bit.

★ ACE RATING 925 ON C64

PIPE DREAM

El/Lucasfilm ● Gameboy £25

Most readers will probably be more familiar with this game under its original title of *Pipemania*. All the action takes place on a 10 x 7 grid. Using a cursor you have to drop varying sections of piping onto the grid, with the aim of making a pipeline for 'flooz' to flow down. Should the flooz leak before it has passed through a set number of pipe sections then it's game over. Later levels introduce directional pipes (the flooz MUST flow a certain way) and obstacles. Infuriatingly addicitive - it's the sort of game the Gameboy was designed for.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON GAMEBOY

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real cliff-hanger aspect to it. A gem.

★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA

RISE OF THE DRAGON

Sierra/Dynamix ● PC £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99

An entertaining and graphically superb - if little short-lived - adventure. Set in the gloomy pollution-ridden city of Los Angeles circa 2053, you play private 'tec 'Blade' Hunter. The Mayor's daughter has been killed by some duff narcotics, the cops are chasing their own tails and it's up to you to get to the bottom of the drug-peddling scam. All game interaction is controlled by simple point-and-click, either to use or examine objects in rooms or to select conversation dialogue with other characters from multiple-choice menus. Each location is depicted in superb style, with some very atmospheric graphics. The only *caveat* is that even moderately-accomplished adventurers will find the task a bit easy.

★ ACE RATING 850 ON IBM PC

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and - hard to believe I know - actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

SORCERORS GET ALL THE GIRLS

Legend/Microprose ● Currently only available on PC in the US. Call US 'Prose on 0101 301 771 6700 for mail order details.

Set in a medieval fantasy world, you play a student at Sorceror University who wakes one day to find the campus deserted. Something terrible's happened - and it's up to you to save the day... This has all the qualities you'd expect from an adventure written by ex-Infocom staff: it's big, well-written, with lots of (sometimes quite dreadful) humour, graphics (occasionally animated) and - most importantly - an engaging plot with loads of sub-scenarios. The only minus point is the antiquated parser, which has to be to do *everything*.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

SPEEDBALL 2

Mirrorsoft ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £TBA

The sequel to the Bitmap Bros' violent '88 hit. Basically more of the same but with improved graphics, a bigger multi-directional scrolling pitch (festooned with bumpers and ball energisers), extra power-ups and armour to pick up or buy between games, smoother control and a depth-enhancing player-manager element. Highly playable, and the power-ups do have a noticeable affect on the game. The Amiga version promises to be even better with meatier sound effects. More fun than beating up your kid brother.

★ ACE RATING 889 ON ATARI ST

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

Activision ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99

A (sort of) sequel to Paul Shirley's original 8-bit game. This one sees

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★ ACE RATING 890 ON AMIGA AND 880 ON ATARI ST

STRIDER

Capcom ● Megadrive $40

This coin-op conversion was reviewed some time ago on home computer. Thankfully, the Megadrive incarnation is supremely superior - if you didn't know better you'd swear you were playing the arcade machine. Strider Hiryu has to jump and tumble through levels of acrade-perfect action. Stunning for its graphics, sound and gameplay, *Strider* is a must-buy for any Megadrive owner.

★ ACE RATING 919 ON SEGA MD

SUPER MARIOLAND

Nintendo ● Super Famicom (inc. with console)

Could this be the best platform game available? The game follows the seemingly never-ending adventures of Mario, as he jumps and joy-rides his way through 99 sub-levels of platform action. Complete this and you can consider yourself a rwal games supremo. This tiny cartridge is packed with superlative graphics, sound and gameplay -if you ever needed a reason for splashing out on the Famicom, then here it is.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON FAMICOM

TEAM SUZUKI

Gremlin ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99

Gremlin go from strength to strength with this marvellous bike game. The action is depicted using amazingly fast 3D polygon graphics, allowing a greater degree of realistic modelling for the bike's performance. Control is very responsive - perhaps a little too responsive, which can make play frustrating at first. THE bike game for the Amiga - but remember that you'll need to put in a small amount of effort to begin with.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but any sense of deja vu is completely dispelled by the use of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the higher speed models.

★ ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans kneel and pray - an essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Empire ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £29.99 ● Macintosh £29.99 ● C64 £TBA

A highly-polished *Shadow of the Beast 2* beater. The plot is yer usual slay-the-demon-and-win-a-princess effort, but the superlative graphics and audio, combined with enjoyable, if ultimately shallow, gameplay. The game is split into 'scenes', each with a different style, i.e. left/right horizontal scroller or *Barbarian*-style hack-'em. This variety helps sustain interest and should keep arcade fans more than happy.

★ ACE RATING 884 ON AMIGA

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ACE DIARY

MARCH 1991

10-16 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Image Works: *Champion of the Raj* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99).

Rainbird: *Elite Plus* (PC £29.99). Graphically enhanced version of classic space trader.

Ocean: *Sim Earth* (ST, PC £34.99). Maxis's follow-up to the classic Sim City. If the hype proves to be even half-right, this is going to be one big blockbusting game.

SSI/US Gold: *Eye of the Beholder* (PC £34.99).

US Gold/Lucasfilm: *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (PC £29.99).

Sunday 10
Mother's Day.

Monday 11

Tuesday 12
The pound note was replaced by the pound coin on this day in 1988.

Wednesday 13
The school leaving age was raised to 14 on this day in 1918.

Thursday 14
Horse racing: Cheltenham Gold Cup

Friday 15

Saturday 16
Rugby Union Five Nations Championship: England vs France at Twickenham; Scotland vs Ireland at Murrayfield.

17-23 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Virgin/Magnetic Scrolls: *Magnetic Scrolls Collection* vol 1 (PC £34.99). Three early MS adventures, *Guild of Thieves, Corruption* and *Fish*, revamped to run under windowing system a la *Wonderland*. Also *Wonderland* (ST, Amiga, Archimedes £34.99). Beautifully converted from Lewis Carroll's Alice books, this takes the genre of text/graphic adventures a stage further with Scrolls' own graphic interface.

Virgin: *Supremacy* (C64 £19.99, PC £34.99). Complex space trading game. Suffering some delays in release.

Mirror Image: *Defender of the Crown* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). First release from new Mirrorsoft budget label; classic Cinemaware jousting and wooing game set in Merrie England.

***Speedball* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). As its sequel rides high in the charts, catch up on the original future sports game at a new low price.**

Ocean: *Billy the Kid* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Level 9's HUGE programming system and Ocean in somewhat delayed release drama.

Sunday 17
St Patrick's Day - patron saint of Ireland.

Monday 18
Bank holiday in Northern Ireland.

Tuesday 19

Wednesday 20

Thursday 21
Horse racing flat season opens at Doncaster 1963: the notorious Alcatraz prison, in San Francisco Bay, was closed down.

Friday 22

Saturday 23
National Day, Pakistan

24 - 30 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Image Works: *The Killing Cloud* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Sinister goings-on for you to solve in San Francisco.

Mirror Image: *Rocket Ranger* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Mix of arcade action from Cinemaware on new Mirrorsoft budget label. Also *Carrier Command* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Realtime's graphically superb arcade style game set at sea and in the air.

Rainbird: *Midwinter II - Flames of Freedom* (ST, £29.99). Free the people of Agora from military dictatorship. All elements of the original plus complexity.

Virgin: Viz (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk, ST, Amiga £24.99). Three way race between Johnny Fartpants, Buster Gonad and Biffa Bacon with other characters on the sidelines.

SSI/US Gold: Mediaeval Lord (PC £34.99). Wargame.

Sunday 24
Palm Sunday

Monday 25

Tuesday 26

Wednesday 27
European Football Championship: England vs Republic of Ireland (as usual) at Wembley. Scotland play Bulgaria at Hampden Park, N Ireland are away to Yugoslavia.

Thursday 28
Maundy Thursday

Friday 29
Good Friday
1928: Women aged 21 or over were given the vote.

Saturday 30
British Summer Time begins at 2.00am tomorrow: move clocks forward one hour before going to bed.

31 March - 6th APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

Spectrum Holobyte: *Falcon mkII* (PC, £34.99). New version with SH's Electronic Battlefield System, a common landscape enabling players of other SH sims to link up and play same scenarios.

Mastertronic: *Zork II* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Classic Infocom at a budget price.

Virgin/Magnetic Scrolls: *Magnetic Scrolls Collection* vol 1 (ST, Amiga £29.99). Guild of Thieves, Corruption and Fish, revamped with Wonderland-style windows.

Ocean: *Toki* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk, ST, Amiga £24.99)

US Gold: *Moonshine Racer* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99).

SSI/US Gold: *Mediaeval Lord* (C64 £29.99). Wargame.

Image Works: *Back to the Future III* (Spectrum, C64, CPC, £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk, ST, Amiga, PC £29.99).

Sunday 31
Easter Sunday – Brazilian Formula One Grand Prix at Interlagos.

APRIL

Monday 1
Easter Monday - Bank Holiday (not Scotland)

Tuesday 2

Wednesday 3

Thursday 4
US Masters golf tournament

Friday 5
Navy Task Force left forthe Falklands, in 1982.

Saturday 6
The 3.20 steeplechase at Aintree, better known as the Grand National, takes place.

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SHOP WATCH

Our Dealer Page compiler is on holiday this month – software seller fills the gap...

Listen...my friend knows about computers, and *he* says...'
We all get them at some time. Last week it was my turn. The nervous couple about to embark on that great voyage of discovery called 'Buying your first computer', accompanied by someone they are acquainted with who 'knows about computers.'.

Their needs were simple: they ran a haulage business so they wanted the computer (which they had been talked into purchasing by this 'friend') to keep records, accounts, write letters, and also be able to be of use to the 'kiddies' in their education...

No problem, you might think...And it wouldn't have been if they hadn't brought their friend along with them to ensure they weren't 'sold something that will be useless in three months'.

Every model I demonstrated had faults, according to the friend...'Don't talk to me about Commodores. A mate of mine had three of the buggers and still couldn't get them to work.'

It was developing into a battle of wills between myself and this oikish git with the overactive ignorance gland.

'These five inch disks are no bloody good? What happens if you sit on them?'

'Atari? I wouldn't give them house-room. There's no software around for what you want...'

Actually, there is a very large selection of...

The b*****d kept interrupting me and asking questions and then not even having the decency to listen to my answers.

I would have thrown him out, but he was bigger than me.

Eventually, however, we seemed to be getting somewhere. He made his move...

'You haven't shown us any Amstrads yet.'

Well, I don't really think...

'Where's your 464's then?'

I showed them.

By this time, I didn't care if they bought anything or not. This idiot then proceeded to explain how an Amstrad 464 would be the ideal computer for their needs.

It was my turn now....I started off innocently enough by pointing out the limitations of tape drives as a storage medium.

Friend-Who-Knew-About-Computers (or FWKAC for short), glared at me before reluctantly agreeing and suggested the new 6128. I smiled. He then said that they could always buy tapes and transfer them to disk, if they wanted to.

'Sadly not,' I ejaculated, 'No provision for tape input on this model.'

'What are you talking about? You can stick a Multiface on the back. Give me the book...'

Ha! That caught him. He wasn't expecting that. Good these 'Plus' models, aren't they?

Anyway, to cut a very long story short, as you may have guessed the FWKAC owned an Amstrad 464 himself and wanted his friends to buy the same machine as him so that they could swap software.

Unbelievable, but true.

They went away to have a cup of tea and think about it. On their return, I could see by the FWKAC's smile that he had won. They purchased an Amstrad 464+ to run their business on. While they were paying – and FWKAC was enjoying a triumphant cigarette outside the shop – I politely asked the couple what had swung their decision. the male half spoke for what seemed the first time and said that if they bought the 464, their friend had said that he would give them a copy of Mini Office which he himself owned. I was speechless. I still am, when I think about it.

So, if you have a FWKAC and he offers to come with you when you intend purchasing a computer, be very skeptical!

ATTENTION DEALERS!

The Dealers page will be back next month. Don't forget to let us know what you're up to!

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

Here are the solutions to the January 1991 and February 1991 crosswords. The winners are announced on page 129

January 1991

			1 W				2 T		3 R		4 P	
5 M	6 A	N	I	X		7 D	I	G	I	T	A	L
	N		N		8 E		T		C		G	
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February 1991

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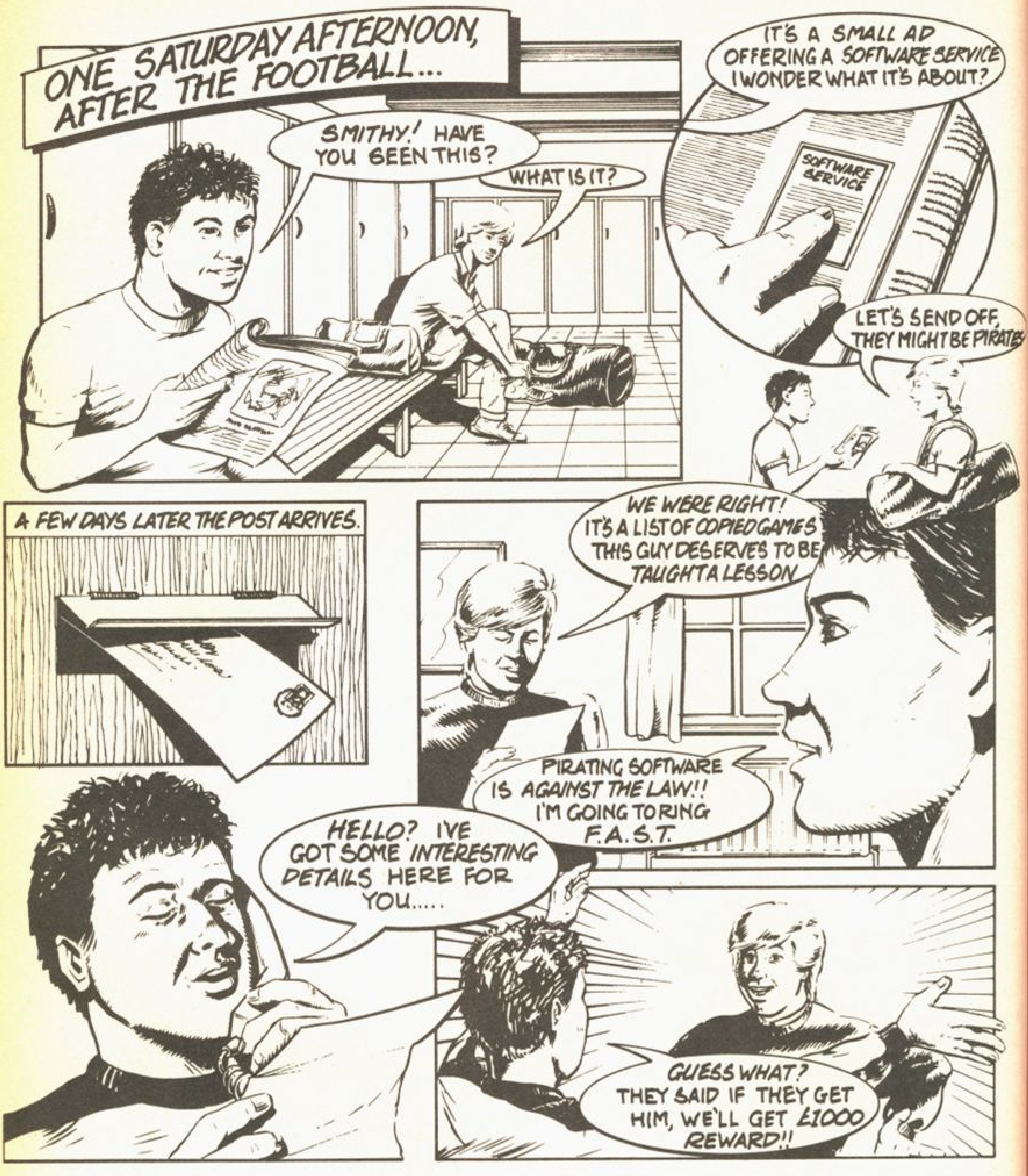
ONE SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AFTER THE FOOTBALL...
SMITHY! HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S A SMALL AD OFFERING A SOFTWARE SERVICE I WONDER WHAT IT'S ABOUT?
SOFTWARE SERVICE
LET'S SEND OFF, THEY MIGHT BE PIRATES
A FEW DAYS LATER THE POST ARRIVES.
WE WERE RIGHT! IT'S A LIST OF COPIED GAMES THIS GUY DESERVES TO BE TAUGHT A LESSON
PIRATING SOFTWARE IS AGAINST THE LAW!! I'M GOING TO RING F.A.S.T.
HELLO? I'VE GOT SOME INTERESTING DETAILS HERE FOR YOU.....
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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who........! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), and that could win you undying fame...or shame! Take the risk!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY TWO

Augustus De Silva finishes the game...

Open Larry's parachute immediately. You'll get stuck in a tree so use your knife. Look at the ground and get the stick. Crawl under the bushes to avoid the killer bees. Now go south and use the stick near the anaconda. Go east and look at the monkeys walk. Walk over the strange pattern and you will have gone east. Don't walk through the water, instead swing from vine to vine until the third vine, then get off. Grab a vine to keep then go east to meet your future wife.

After the story is over you should be at a rock. Go south then east where you will find some ash. Pick it up and return to the rock (try not to fall). Use vine in tree and go north. Throw ash on ice. Head north and put airsick bag in bottle of highly flammable liquid rejuvenator. Light the bottle, throw it into the volcano then dive into the lift. Save your game here to show your friends the long ending sequence.

ZAK McKRACKEN

Another helping of Mike Bareham's solution.

As Melissa put on the helmet, pick up the boombox, open the door and go outside. Switch to Zak and enter the spaceship. Close the door, take off the taped fish bowl and the oxygen tank and use the oxygen valve. Switch to Melissa. Walk right to the huge face then enter the great chamber and walk to the first massive door (it should be open). Now walk to the pedestal and switch to Leslie. Make your way out of the map room using the Mars face map and find your way to the exit of the maze. Give the DAT and the vinyl tape to Melissa. Use the ladder on the pedestal and switch to Melissa. Use the vinyl tape on the DAT then use the DAT on the boombox. Turn on the boombox then click on 'record'. Switch to Leslie and pick up the crystal sphere. Switch to Melissa then walk to the second massive door. Turn on the boombox, click on 'play' and the door will now open. Go through the door and pick up the ankh. Go back to the great chamber and walk to the third massive door. Turn on the boombox and click on 'play'. The door will now open. go through the door and use the ankh on the panel. The forcefield will now disappear.

MEGA QUIZ

Just how much do you know about games? If you tried your hand at last month's unbelievably tough quiz, check out your progress against the answers below...

ROUND 1

1. They are all Gauntlet-style clones.
2. Malnor
3. Coral Sea, Midway, Santa Cruz, Solomon Islands
4. They showed swastikas and were in violation of government legislation prohibiting material likely to arouse Nazi sympathy.
5. Jeff Minter.
6. The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, Shadows of Mordor, War In Middle Earth
7. Baron Von Blubba
8. 'Mommy, I'm scared!'
9. Isvar
10. They are all Defender-style clones.

ROUND 2

Star Paws	Dog
Rana Rama	Frog
Venus	Fly
Samurai Warrior	Rabbit
On the Tiles	Cat
Tower of Babel	Spider
Savage Pond	Tadpole
Crystal Castles	Bear
Sting 64	Bee
Monty on the Run	Mole

ROUND 3

1. Yoritomo and...oops! We haven't got the answer to this one to hand! If you know it, you're one up on us!!
2. Parallax.
3. Judge Dredd, Judge Death (featuring Judge Anderson), Halo Jones, Rogue Trooper, Nemesis the Warlock, Slaine, Strontium Dog
4. 10, including Napoleon
5. All the international players are white.
6. System 3
7. They are both computer aided boardgames
8. Restore all the colour
9. Ashtaroth
10. Daley Thompson
11. The supply wagon
12. C-Bills
13. Germany, USSR, America
14. OutRun, Turbo OutRun, OutRun Europa, Battle OutRun
15. Captain America and Spiderman
16. Three
17. Public Domain
18. The theme to 633 Squadron
19. The number of variations included in the game.
20. Palace and Psygnosis

ROUND 4

Leonardo, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles; Dirk the Daring, Escape from Singe's Castle; S.Screech, Kick Off; Golem, Lord of the Rings; Luigi, Mario Bros; Android Blake, Laser Squad; Norman, Greyfell; Marshall Soult, Austerlitz; Borf, Space Ace; ED-209, Robocop; Chaos, Dungeon Master; Don Badden, TV Sports Football; Berk, Trap Door; Godzilla, Sim City; Number 5, Short Circuit; R2D2, Droids; Fred, Pipeline; Spineback, Zoids; Dr Watson, Sherlock; Shang Fei, Dynasty Wars; Jake, Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters.

THE RATINGS

0-5 In a word, pathetic. The only cure is a subscription to ACE. You'll never be at the forefront of computer entertainment otherwise!

6-15 Hmmm, too much playing old games like Space Invaders, methinks. But you've obviously put in some quality time at that keyboard.

16-25 Not bad at all! Pat yourself on the back and feel mildly superior.

26-30 Pat yourself twice on the back and feel very superior!

31+ Apply for a job at ACE magazine – the address is at the front on the contents pages!

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FREEBIES

Mark Smiddy checks out some cheap educational games for the Amiga

WORK AND PLAY

Amiga £3.50 - Mouse

If there is any truth in the old adage, you can't keep a good man down, then Len Tucker must be a classic example. The indefatigable Welsh wizard, Sparx to his friends, has come up with a beautiful collection of three educational games.

Funtimes Tables is a computerised board game - a bit like snakes and ladders but without either. One or two players can compete with the idea being simply to get from one end of the board to the other. As each player takes a turn, the computer throws a pair of dice and the characters move to a new square. If the player lands on a special square they must answer a simple multiplication problem. When they get the answer right they are moved on a number of squares determined by the difficulty of the problem.

Second in the line up is *Let's Go Shopping*. This one player game puts the player in a grocery shop. Unlike some other programs of this genre, Let's Go Shopping poses a variety of questions with a wide variation of difficulty. Divisions are thrown in with multiplications in a practical way. For instance: "You have 32p how many drinks can you buy?" The actual price is displayed elsewhere - as it would be in a real shop. Other puzzles include the more classic, "If apples cost 9p each, how much would 5 cost." and so on. Artificial the prices may be, but the concept remains valid.

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, are all those nice PC people sitting back and saying it's not for us? Come on folks - if you don't hurry your boat will get sunk by the ST and Amiga crowd. Are you really going to suffer that outrage?

Last comes *Click Clock* and no prizes for guessing what this one is about. What makes this stand out from the rest is the option of a digital or analogue timepiece. And not just that - the two clocks virtually fill the screen and work in tandem - any adjustments to the time on one clock are reflected on the other. However, to keep things just a little tricky, only one clock can be set. Questions are set in simple English: "Please make the digital watch say - twenty to five." The only practical limitations to the game are that the time only increments in five minute intervals and the analogue face does not represent the fine movements in the hour hand. These are really minor points though.

SHAMELESS PLUG

Thanks to the following:
PC: Advantage Shareware – 0242 224340. Amiga: AMOS PD Library - 0942 495261. ST: Goodman PDL - 0782 335650. Budgie UK.

All three games in *Work And Play* are backed up by excellent graphics, superb spot animations and cheery little tunes - something which have become a trademark of all Len's offerings. Overall the designs are good and the levels about right for the average primary school child, although the marking system could be improved. Overall though, this proves once again that good software needn't be expensive - *Fun School* and Mandarin have a serious competitor - his name is Sparx.

THE WORD FACTORY

Amiga £3.50 - Joystick

One of the worst problems involved with programming computer aided teaching - CAT (there's a new one for you) software is designing a spelling program. Oh that's easy - just get the computer to say the word and get the child to say it. Sure - but even the Amiga's excellent speech system is tricky to understand until you get used to it. OK, so what if you describe the word and get the child to spell it? I tried it - and it doesn't work in practice. The only solution is to get the child to study a word for a few seconds then spell it back - and this is the approach adopted by Delwyn Farr's *Word Factory*.

Mr Farr's presentation of this apparently simple problem is quite superb. Three levels allow the child to attempt spelling of four, five or six letter words - some of them quite complex. But a thoughtful control system, using just the joystick, neatly avoids the added complexity required for a child attempting to find their way around the quirky QWERTY keyboard layout.

The word is displayed for a short period after which time the program enters the factory. A fork-lift truck brings in a crate, drops it and exits at high speed. Now the child has to spell the word, letter-by-letter, selecting each with the joystick. Ten correct answers are required to fill the truck - but there seems to be no limit to the number of wrong replies.

Animations are limited but the sound and graphics are, like Len Tucker's work, of the highest quality. Perhaps the game's only failing is the provision of a "quit" option in the letter selection space. This makes it a little too easy to quit accidentally. Also, there is no provision to delete an incorrectly placed letter. Nevertheless, this is one to keep the kids quiet and the parents happy - or should that be the other way round?

WHAT NO ST

Horror of horrors the ST has finally given up the ghost and died - at least the disk drive did. With a final whirring of gears it ground to a halt and almost took a disk with it. "Kismet Smiddy," it said "kismet" as the last puff of smoke drifted from the ventilation ducts. Hopefully my tame repair man will have fixed it by next month when I'll be looking at some ST titles from Budgie, among others.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA MICROMANNICA

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection – and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

Here it is...a list of those vital topics that every up-market gamester needs to have at his command. Just because you thrashed the host at two-player *Tetris* doesn't mean you'll be the star of the party. No chum, you need know-how. And here's where to find it....

Each entry has a brief explanation, followed by a reference to an issue, so that you can hunt down the full lucid, in-depth, ACE assessment.

At the time of writing, back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 onwards except Aug88/11, Mar90/30, May90/32, Aug90/35 at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to the address below. If the issue you require is not available, the return of your payment may take some time – you are therefore strongly advised to telephone 0858 410510 before sending your order to check that the issue you require is still available.

ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500,
Leicester LE99 6AA.

- **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]
- **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]
- **BATTLETECH,** "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]
- **BIT BOPPER**, the world's first total audio-visual entertainment system by Technation. Alex Blok's cyberscratch bit-tripper packs twin 32-bit decks, Sony erasable optical disc and custom-made video samplers. [ACE19]
- **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.
- **CDTV,** Commodore's attempt to bring multimedia to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]
- **COSMIC OSMO,** the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.
- **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]
- **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]
- **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]
- **INMOS FLIGHT SIMULATOR**, the world's first multi-player Transputer game running at 23 frames per second on 11 Transputers. [ACE7]
- **INTEGRATED FLIGHT AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES SYSTEM**, Plessey's answer to boring plane journeys - video games displayed on the seat in front of you. [ACE25]
- **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]
- **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]
- **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]
- **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]
- **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]
- **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]
- **TURBOEXPRESS,** currently the best colour handheld console - a portable version of the NEC PC Engine, fully compatible with existing games cartridges. [ACE35]

GAMESBUSTING WITH TNT BACK ISSUES

If you're looking for game solutions, here's a reminder of some of the games we've carried solutions to in past issues of ACE. We're sorry we haven't had time to update it for this issue – we'll crack down and get it done for next month.

ISSUE 29
Dungeon Master Guide (part one) - Les Rigden
AD&D and *Bard's Tale* - Colin Taylor
Batman- the Movie - Adam Morley

ISSUE 30
Dungeon Master Guide (part two)

ISSUE 31
Space Ace - David Williams and Chris West
Dungeon Master Guide (part three)
Future Wars - Phil Thompson

ISSUE 32
Dungeon Master Guide (part four, final part)
Complete guide to *Y's* - Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook

ISSUE 33
No guides or solutions, but loads of shorties

ISSUE 34
Castle Master - Incentive
Midwinter - Microprose
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part one) - Jon

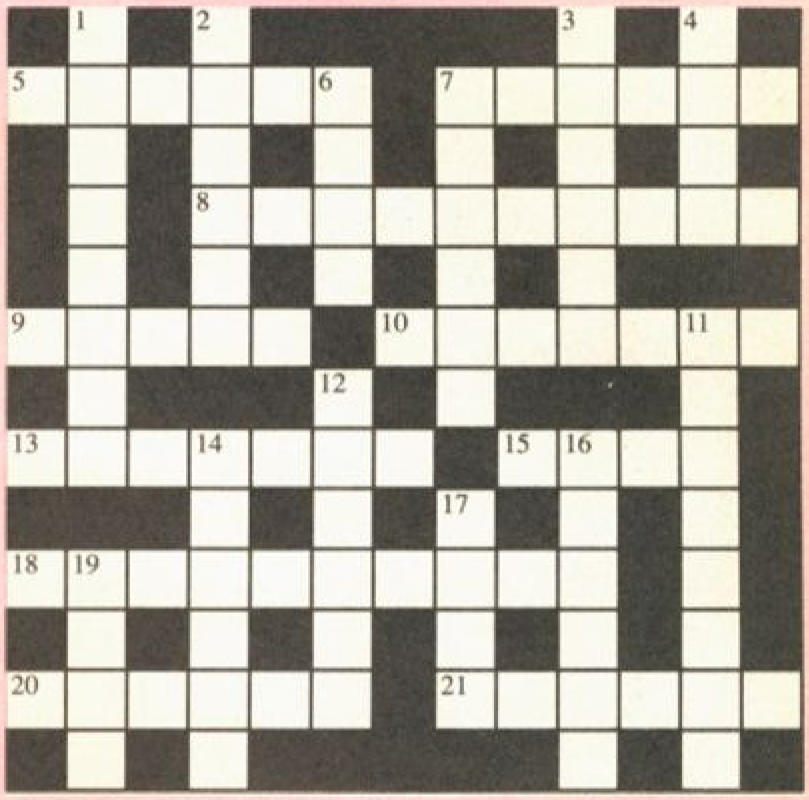
ISSUE 35
Drakkhen Guide (part one) - Adam Morley
Xenomorph (part one) - Alan Coates
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part two)

ISSUE 36
Defender of the Crown (mini players guide) - Paul Thomas
Lots of shorties

ISSUE 37
Drakkhen (part two)
Xenomorph (part two)
Guide to hacking on C64 (part three)

PUZZLE PRIZES

If you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat, you'll get a free game for your machine. We regret that we cannot specify exact titles, but we'll do our utmost to ensure that the prizes get your adrenalin pumping. Don't forget to specify your machine format!



CLUES ACROSS

5 Software house's highest point (6)
7 Bad characters playing with poor Leo's game from Loriciels (6)
8 First Greek character flourishes an Infogrames game (5,5)
9 Game of corvettes (5)
10 So clone is playing at the control panel (7)
13 Attack (on Precinct 13?) (7)
15 Mindscape product seen in some games (5)
18 Cattle Beth rounded up in a game by Infocom (10)
20 Rest it after playing game (6)
21 Mirrorsoft's bird of prey (6)

CLUES DOWN

1 Herman's family game (8)
2 Force of collision in Audiogenic game (6)
3 A blockhead stuffs Battle Tank game from Electronic Arts. (6)
4 Lied about not working (4)
6 Use a keyboard of a sort. (4)
7 South American flower (6)
11 Grand in loot Ron round in software house (8)
12 Game Selina plays (6)
14 In part Uranium's a game from Gremlin (6)
16 Mister Hardy first to get Eli game from Microprose (2,4)
17 Unable to hear fade-out (4)
19 Man's broken axle (4)

Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS

HOW TO ENTER

Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:
ACE April 91 Crossword,
Priory Court
Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

IMPORTANT NOTICE!
The deadline system for entries, which used to be the first Thursday of the month named on the cover, HAS BEEN CHANGED. to make things easier, the deadline in future will always be the 8TH OF THE MONTH MENTIONED ON THE COVER. This is to bring the Crossword entries into line with the new ACE release schedule. So the deadline for this month's crossword is Monday April 8th 1991. Don't miss it!

THE WINNERS

There isn't quite enough space on the crossword page this month for the solutions, as we have two to print (the February and January '91 puzzles – there wasn't one in March). You'll therefore find the solutions to both those puzzles in this issue on page 119.

The winners were: Patrick Stanley from Stoke Newington (January crossword) and Mr S.A. Siddiqui of Acton (February crossword).

Incidentally, there was a printing error in the February '91 crossword which many of you spotted and remarked on: 8 across should have had five letter spaces, and 9 across only seven. We've amended the default grid on our system to make sure this doesn't happen again – our apologies if you were confused by the error.

THE BLITTER END

THE CONSOLE

gh. One US newsletter we received this month has come up with a new term for the Gulf war. Reporting the impact of the war on consumer electronics, it quoted a *'national chain executive'* who was at pains to reassure us that '...footage of relatively antiseptic 'Nintendo' air war is easy for the country'. Of course, back in Vietnam, that was a real Sega conflict, that was. And you should see the desert around Kuwait – positively *littered* with cartridge cases.

*

Ever since the press reported that Sony and Nintendo are jointly developing a CD unit for the Super Famicom, everyone has suddenly gone bananas, making all sorts of extravagant claims for the CD medium as a result.

Actually, the truth is rather depressing. As far as Sony and Nintendo are concerned, what has happened is this: Sony have been supplying Nintendo with chips and other paraphernalia for some time now. The two engineering teams involved apparently got on well together and, over a pint or two of Saki, decided it would be fun to do something in the CD line.

The bad news is that the unit will be completely proprietary and will not run CD-audio disks. This is par for the course – Sony's Data Diskman, for example, will not even feature any form of graphic display. Nor will it have any means of interfacing it with a computer.

Talk about missed opportunities. Sony say that these features will be introduced to the Data Discman range at a later date, but it seems unlikely that the Nintendo/Sony unit will ever be anything other than a blatant bit of dog-in-the-manger publishing. It may give the CD market a pump in the arm, but it'll give it a hump as well.

*

Next month will see ACE reporting from Chris Crawford's software developers conference in San Jose. Dozens of sessions are planned, from 'How to do character licensing deals' to 'Good graphics vs Good game'. Surprisingly, given Chris' renowned antipathy to CD-ROM, there's even a session entitled 'Why Optical Disk Games Will Work'. The only thing that sticks in Blitter's throat is the fact that we have to go all the way over to the States to attend a conference like this. What's wrong with the European software business, that it can't get a similar symposium going over here?

Actually, there *is* such an event – this summer in Montreux we'll all be able to attend the Technology for Entertainment conference. Well done Europe – except that it's an American conference, organised for Californians who want to have a binge on the Old Continent.

*

Meanwhile, as you may know, the UK software business has been having a binge of its own in Marbella. That this affair was an unashamed inducement to waste time and money in an orgy of chaotic alcoholic frenzy and should be condemned by all decent people is quite clear from the fact that *I wasn't invited. At least one* marketing manager was seen to disappear during the proceedings, presumed eaten by dolphins, while the rest of the attendees indulged in rather more conventional physical misbehaviour. Star of the show, however, were the couple – who shall remain nameless – who managed in four days to put in 40 minutes of conferencing. Don't worry, everyone – there may be a recession on, but we're fighting back!

*

A few numbers for you. Last year, camcorder sales rose by 24% in America; in the nine months to December '90, Electronic Arts received revenues totalling $76,579,000; and if you think that's a lot, in just *one quarter* of 1990, Walt Disney grossed $1,492,383,000.

● ***Blit blit!***

8-BIT *WING COMMANDER* AHEAD!

The game you thought you could only play on a 35MHz 386 VGA PC is heading for a 'stunning' 8-bit conversion, according to software developer Vince Tyrell, who claims to have the conversion rights for Europe. 'It's going to be an absolute winner,' he declared, 'Anyone who thinks that text-entry games are dead is talking through their hat. We've managed colour on the CPC and greatly enhanced the intelligence of the alien on the C64 version.' Origin were, fortunately, unavailable for comment...

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

The next issue (out April 8th) is bursting with exclusive features from the cutting edge of games technology. Make sure you get your copy so that you can read about...

- **State-of-the-art hydraulic arcade console development in California**
- **The world's first virtual sex movie**
- **Exclusive report from Chris Crawford's games conference**
- **Our breath-taking expose of the horrible effects of prolonged exposure to shoot-em-ups and other game categories, as shown by mutated life-forms from Planet Xenon and other far-future games enclaves**
- **Exclusive coverage of The Godfather game**
- **An exclusive preview of the world's most powerful CD games development system**

...and much, much more. Use the form below to reserve *your* copy...

Dear Newsagent,

I have just spent 140 hours playing *Xenon II*. I'm mean, swift, and ruthless. Please reserve me a copy of ACE magazine (Advanced Computer Entertainment), otherwise I shall be forced to marry your daughter.

PS ACE is out on the 8th of every month.

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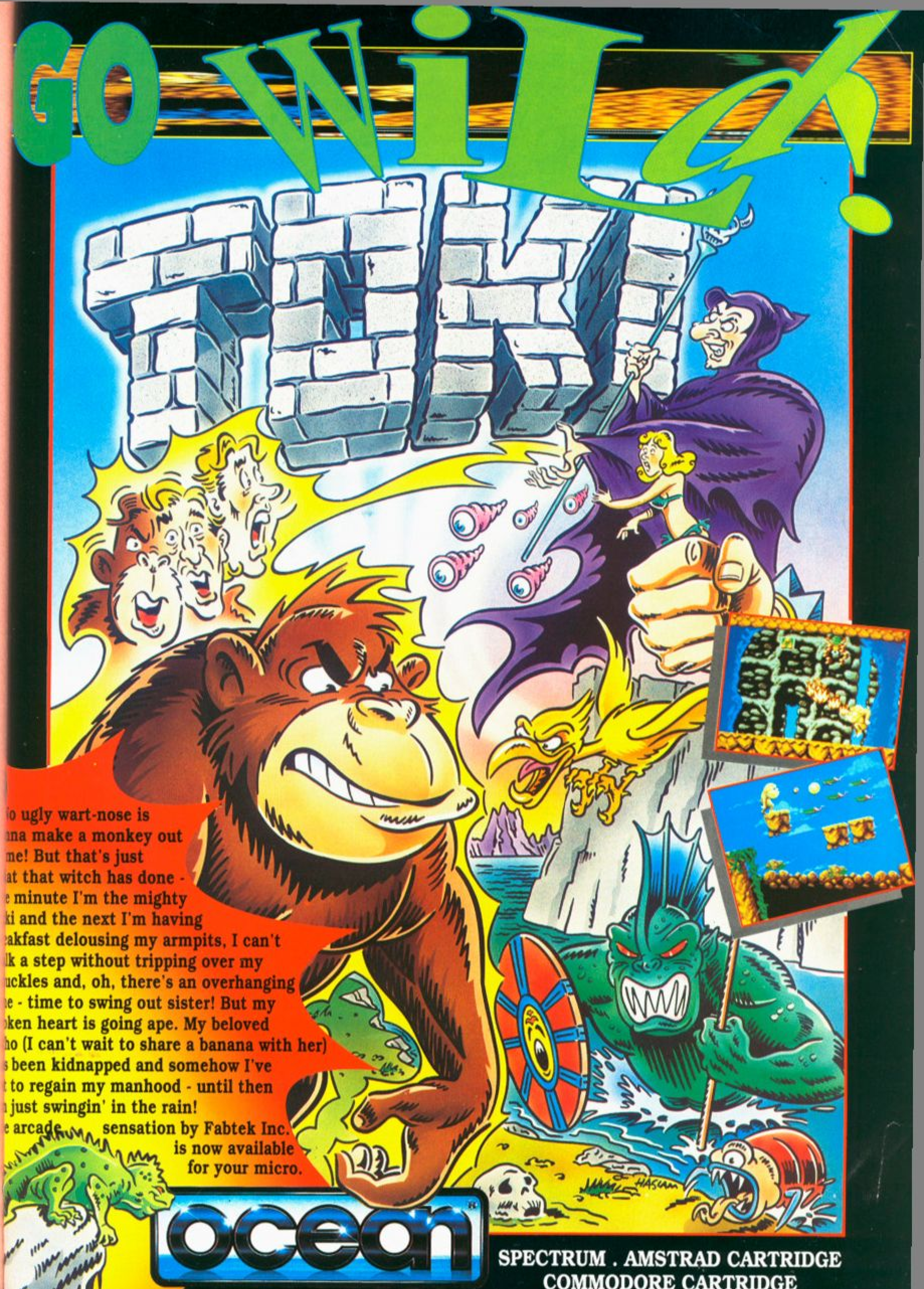

io ugly wart-nose is
nna make a monkey out
me! But that's just
at that witch has done -
e minute I'm the mighty
ki and the next I'm having
eakfast delousing my armpits, I can't
lk a step without tripping over my
uckles and, oh, there's an overhanging
e - time to swing out sister! But my
oken heart is going ape. My beloved
ho (I can't wait to share a banana with her)
s been kidnapped and somehow I've
t to regain my manhood - until then
n just swingin' in the rain!
e arcade sensation by Fabtek Inc.
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for your micro.

ocean

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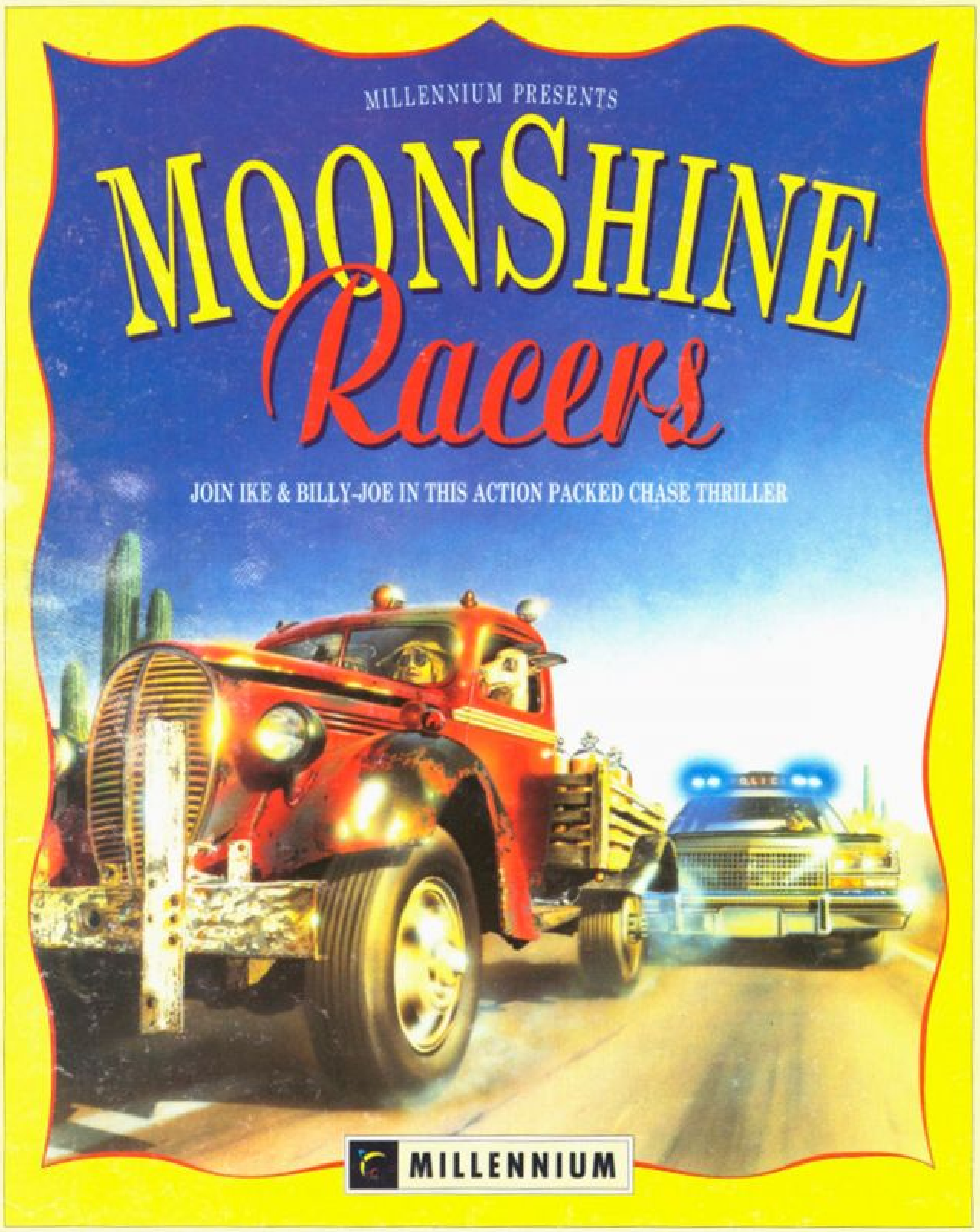
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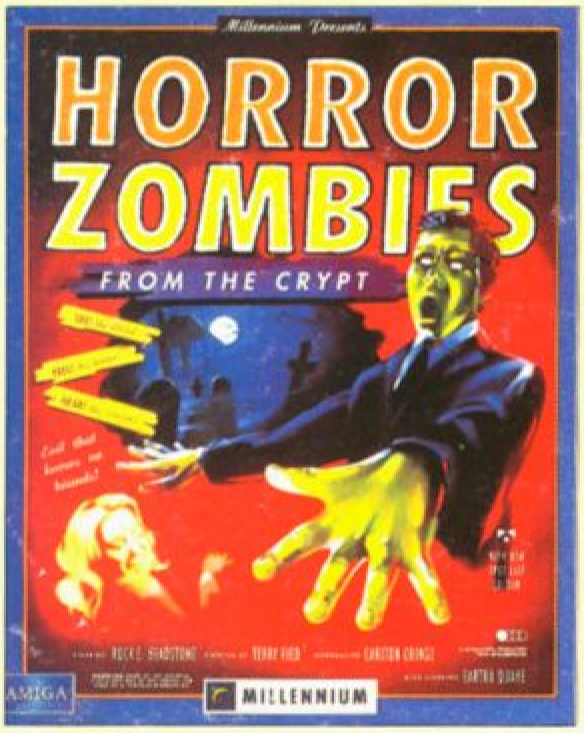
MOONSHINE
Racers
JOIN IKE & BILLY-JOE IN THIS ACTION PACKED CHASE THRILLER
MILLENNIUM

Hold on to your hat as you join *Ike* and *Billy Joe* in a crazy chase along the highways. You've gotta get the **Moonshine** to the customers before sun-down and first to make the delivery gets the pay off. *Sheriff Sam's* hot on your trail so you've gotta use the cash to upgrade your jalopy, install a CB radio, get a decent map and keep one step ahead of Smokey. *Ten four good buddies YEEHAW!!!*

- Equip your hotrod with turbos, superchargers and tyres in the spare parts shop
- Dodge and weave your way past rival racers - switch to **Moonshine** for *turbo power*
- Use the map to take the quick way past roadblocks and radar traps
- CB Radio hook up to listen to *snoopin' Sheriff Sam's* no-good plans
- Fast scrolling *race and chase action* in the wide-open Tennessee country

Amiga
Atari ST and STE
IBM PC (from May 1991)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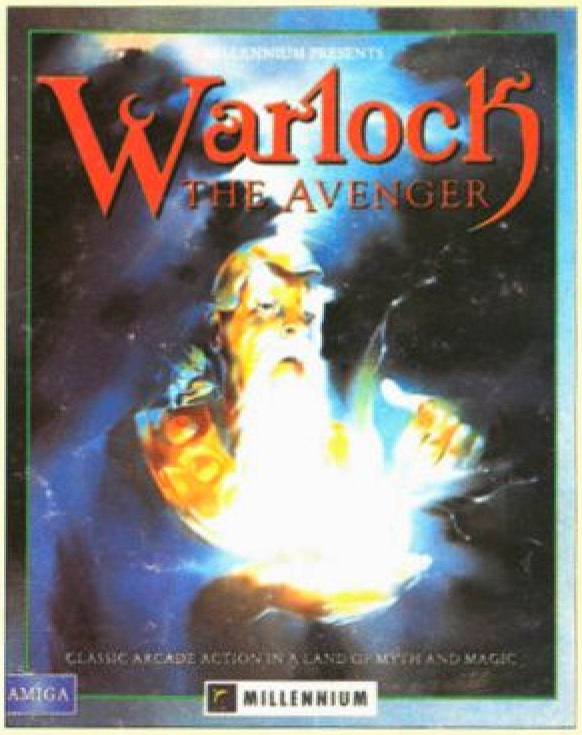
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Warlock
THE AVENGER
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